

## **Contemporary or Temporary Music?**

Some Basic Questions and Conclusions  
Regarding Christian Rock Music

Pastor Kelly Sensenig

Music is a touchy subject. It's a hot potato in the Church. The issue of Christian music 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 an unbiased Biblical philosophy of musical expression in worship. I want to be clear and kind as I draw the battle lines.

Today nobody wants to correct another person's musical choices and create worship wars. However, we are in a spiritual war whether we like it or not because we are called upon to "war a good warfare" (1 Tim. 1:18). In this study, I want to present to you why Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) is temporary in nature or why it has no lasting and eternal value (1 Jn. 2:17). Through a series of questions and answers let's discover what God's Word teaches about music in general and more specifically what the Scriptures teach about a type of music that reflects the same values, vices, and cultural expressions of the world system (1 Jn. 2:15).

Let's clear the record so people don't misunderstand my purpose in writing. In this study on music, I'm not concluding that all Christians who listen to Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) are in total rebellion against God and His ways. I'm not saying they don't love Jesus, that they are overtaken by Satan and Satanic music, and that they are only living for fleshly purposes. It's not my conclusion that they never manifest any characteristics of the Spirit's fruit and holiness in their lives.

My purpose in writing is to expose the worldliness of rock music and its negative impacts upon Christians who pursue it. Every Christian is in a battle, and they must examine themselves (1 Cor. 11:28) and their music from a Biblical perspective to make sure they are honoring God with their worship and musical choices. Christ said, "I have a few things against thee" (Rev. 2:14, 20). This means that the believers needed to shore up some specific portions of their lives by separating from certain evil influences even within their local churches in order to please and honor God. My goal in this study is for you to apply Christ's examination to your life as it relates to your musical choices and make the changes you sense are necessary in your worship and music.

The Bible forbids the practice of comparing ourselves to one another (2 Cor. 10:12) in order to determine who is more spiritual. We must not possess a “holier than thou” attitude when discussing music with others. At the same time, we cannot use the “holier than thou” attitude as a smokescreen to avoid facing our musical choices which do not align with God’s standard of truth and character.



It’s not my purpose to pit God’s saints against one another as we study the topic of music and worship. My goal is to compare ourselves to what the Word of God teaches on these subjects (“What saith the Scripture” – Rom. 4:3) and then evaluate our music, worship, and spiritual life on the authority of God’s Word. Many Christians don’t have a Biblical basis for their music. But when all the Biblical commands and principles of Bible separation are taken into consideration, CCM fails the litmus test of Scripture. Marketing, likeability, and physical attraction often wins out over truth, spirituality, and Christlikeness in our music and worship (2 Cor. 3:18).

Of course, until a person is convinced that he needs help, he cannot be helped. Furthermore, a person who is convinced against his will is of the same opinion still. My desire is to present truth clearly and let God change your heart, will, and opinion regarding Contemporary Christian Music.

Something else needs to be mentioned at this point. God does not make “cookie cutter Christians” who are all on the same sanctification level (1 Thess. 4:3-4) even though Christians are in some measure striving to be more like Christ (Phil. 3:14). The Bible also mentions about sins of ignorance (Lev. 4:2; Numb. 15:28) which are specific sins that we can commit because of our lack of knowledge and growth in the Christian life (2 Pet. 3:18).

Can a Christian who is not as spiritually advanced in sanctification have fellowship with God? Can a young Christian who is still discovering about many of his sins and who might overlook a specific sin out of ignorance have fellowship with God? The answer is simple. Yes! This is because the blood of Jesus, God’s Son, keeps cleansing us from “all sin” (1 John 1:7) which refers to sin of every kind and sin in every form. This would include even our sins of ignorance that might be related to listening to CCM.

Naturally only God knows at any moment the full extent of a person's unrighteousness versus fellowship with Him. Each Christian, however, is responsible to confess or acknowledge whatever sins the light of God's holiness makes him aware of (1 John 1:7), and when he does so, a complete and perfect cleansing is granted to him (1 Jn. 1:9) and he continues to advance in his progressive sanctification (2 Cor. 3:18). My desire for writing about music is that Christians might continue to grow and advance in their sanctified living as a result of this study on music (Eph. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:2).

Sometimes I sense that I am a voice crying in the wilderness of musical rebellion and confusion. But seeking to promote the Biblical principles and commands related to godly music is a noble cause. God has called us to sanctification "in all holy conversation and godliness" (2 Pet. 3:11) or in every area of our lives.

So what about Christian rock music? Does God approve of it? Is God in it? Let's ask some specific questions related to CCM (Christian Contemporary Music) versus TSM (Traditional Sacred Music) which is separated music (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

### **Should We Mix Satan's Kingdom with God's Kingdom?**



The Bible teaches that God's people should not take those things from Satan's kingdom and incorporate them into their own personal lives and local churches for God "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col 1:13). "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light" (Eph 5:8). "Ye are all the

children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (1 Thess 5:5).

These reminders should cause every believer to dispel the darkness in his or her life and live in the spiritual realm of light (holiness, righteousness, purity). This would include the area of music because rock music has brought worldly secularization into the Church. The Church has lost the lines of demarcation in the area of music and has become a copycat of musical rebellion and behavior patterns of the unsaved. But Christians are called to reflect the light and not the night. We are

summoned to separate from the darkness and only embrace the light. No more night – only light!

The ethical depravity of rock music is one of those things Satan has introduced into the Church which has had a corrupting influence on millions of Christians. It is one of Satan's primary weapons that he has used to make the perverse seem glamorous, exciting, and appealing to the flesh. Rock music ridiculed religion, morality, and God. It was created to promote rebellion, homosexuality, Satanism, the occult, drugs, alcohol/drunkenness, murder, suicide, incest, vulgarity, anti-patriotism and above all else, free sex through its sounds and lyrics. Why would any Christian want to reflect or mimic the same type of sound that has historically and in our present day promoted rebellion in the lives of untold millions of people?

Leonard Seidel correctly concludes:

“There is no reason for taking the world's culture and adopting it as our own, especially when that culture tolerates a message that is plainly anti-Christ.”

This means rock music is against Christ - His holiness and righteous ways. Any attempt to make a bridge between the two worlds of CCM and Sacred Music always ends in compromise. Today it is normal for many Christians to listen to the musical rebellion of secular rock music without blinking an eye. They refuse to practice Bible separation in the area of their musical choices and enjoy the moral depravity of this type of music “and love *to have it so*” (Jer. 5:31). Many are addicted to a particular sound and sensual message. They are bound to a beat that holds them under the influence of the world, the flesh, and the Devil (Eph. 6:11).

The Church is supposed to change the world, but the world has changed the Church. Sadly, many Christians think they are experiencing revival because of an exciting form of rock music being played in their churches and at CCM concerts. However, it's not revival but leanness or a plague of worldliness occurring in their souls (Ps. 106:15). God only sends revival on His non-negotiable terms (2 Chron. 7:14).

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

TESTIMONY

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!!!"

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 (sound) that causes the rebellious spirit and attitude."

It is normal for many Christians to worship God while imbibing the same musical rhythms (sounds) that Satan uses to cause rebellious spirits and attitudes in people. Christians listen to a similar type of rock sound that has now been allegedly Christianized by adding Christian words and themes to it. However, it is the same sound that Satan has used for many years to promote things such as sex, drugs, the occult, and general rebellion against God.

This type of "Christianized" form of musical rebellion is a travesty against God who is "righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works" (Ps. 145:17). God has called us to live in a manner that reflects His nature of holiness and not hellishness. God's saints are called upon to "be holy in all manner of conversation" or living which would include the type of music we listen to (1 Pet. 1:15).

Someone will ask, "Show me where the Bible says that rock music is evil?" We might counter with a response like this: "Show me where it's okay to use the same type of musical sound used by Satanists, Madonna, Michael Jackson, and the sex and drug culture." Those embracing CCM will also state: "There's no chapter that says, 'Thou shalt only use this kind of rhythm.'"



Of course, this is a smokescreen designed to intimidate Christians into believing that nobody can come to an ironclad conclusion about rock rhythms relating to carnality and worldliness. But the Bible also does not specifically say, "Thou shalt not use drugs" or "Thou shalt not eat 5 Big Mac sandwiches every day for the rest of your

life.” The same is true about certain rhythms that were historically and specifically used to promote worldliness, carnality, and rebellion in the lives of people. However, the Bible gives us commands and enduring principles that condemn such practices. In a general way the Bible calls us to separate from *anything* and *everything* that Satan has specifically created and used for His sinister and sinful purposes in the world (2 Cor. 6:14-17; 7:1).

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.”

Those who seek to justify CCM also conclude that “The Bible has nothing to say about musical styles” or “There is no such thing as abominable praise.” Again, the Bible does not say, “Thou shalt not listen to secular and religious rock music.” But neither does the Bible directly say “Thou shalt not gamble” or “Thou shalt not skip church every other Sunday.” However, the Bible does give very clear and broad-sweeping commands along with Bible principles that relate to every area of our lives including music.

For those who want to know, the Bible does give us clear commands to separate from heathen paganism and worship which would include rock music in all of its forms.

2 Corinthians 6:14-16 asks some compelling questions:

**“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers** (in their sinful lifestyles and depravity – including their musical rebellion against God): **for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?** (unholy mixture between good and evil, right and wrong, spiritual and fleshly) **And what concord hath Christ with Belial?** (the worthless and wicked one, another name for Satan) **or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?** (an unbeliever who lives according to the dictates of the flesh) **And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; 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”** (our body is God’s holy temple or dwelling place which means it should not be used for pagan worship that reflects Satan’s agenda and kingdom of darkness).



## The Murky Mixture

These commands forbid the murky mixture or blending together of immoral secular music techniques with moral or sacred lyrics. God condemns mixing Christian lyrics with immoral sound. This is not only mixed music but mixed-up Christianity. Christian lyrics do not validate sensual sound but instead creates moral confusion. The simple message of these verses is that God hates a mixture. The same should be true for us. We are to “Abhor (*detest*) that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Rom. 12:9).

In other words, don’t mix what is good with that which is bad. Light and darkness or righteousness and unrighteousness are incompatible realms. They cannot coexist together without causing spiritual conflict, confusion, and carnality. A wholesale musical erosion has taken place which undermines that which is to be decent and godly in the realm of Sacred Music. Rock music is the sound of a perverted culture; religious rock music is evidence of a worldly system designed to mimic the carnal way of living.

The clear teachings on Bible separation are not “misused verses” which some musicians suggest are applied to the musical debate to form traditions that are not based upon the real issues. Of course, this is dodging the central truth of Bible separation and holiness which needs to be applied to every area of living – including music (1 Pet. 1:15). Bible verses on separation are not used to develop a narrow, nitpicking, legalistic, musical, church police force as some suggest but are given to govern and guide us personally into a new realm of musical choices that no longer reflect the world system (Tit. 2:12).

The direct commands and principals of Bible separation (the believer’s set apartness) are the basis for defining and refusing to use unseparated music that reflects the world’s corrupt standards. These commands are used to develop Biblical and musical *convictions*. They are not used to merely develop *traditions* against progressive, unseparated, worldly, and carnal music patterns. Truth is always to be the focus and win out over mere human traditions (Mk. 7:8).

We need to come clean in the area of music and recognize that there has historically been a type of musical rebellion introduced in the Church which reflects Satan’s kingdom of darkness. God summons us to separate from Satan’s ways or darkness, including the musical manipulation of rock music (2 Cor. 6:14-17; Eph. 5:11).

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 must remember that Satan was created to be musically perfect and glorify God. In referring to Satan, Ezekiel records: “the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created” (Ezek. 28:13). As the onetime leader of Heaven’s music Satan obviously knows what kind of music reflects God’s character and glorifies Him. But he also knows how to manipulate music and take the glory away from God’s pristine holiness and the perfect musical order God intended to be reflected in all worship and praise.

Someone once said:

“When Satan was cast out of Heaven he fell into the choir loft.”

This means part of his strategic “wiles” (Eph. 6:11) or scheming plans promoted on Earth has been to introduce within society musical rebellion that does not reflect God’s character and ways. It was true during the days of Moses (Ex. 32:17), it was true in the days of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 3:5-7), and such is the case today with the introduction of rock music and Contemporary Christian Music in our present generation, which in some measure reflects the corrupted culture of the last days (2 Tim. 3:1-7).

Here is the point. Lyrics, no matter how spiritual, cannot make sensual music morally pure. This is because the message of the musical sound does not match the message of the lyrics. Rock music baptized by Christian lyrics or putting Christian lyrics to immoral music doesn’t cause the music to become moral any more than attending church makes a person a Christian.

Jeremiah 48:10 warns: “Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully.” In other words, trying to Christianize sensual music is a work of deceit and trickery. Christian rock music is an oxymoron (contradictory term). This is because nothing that is truly Christian can be part of Satan’s world of darkness and moral depravity. God does not rock and neither should His flock. Sadly, Christians have brought the sensual/sexual sounds of rock music into the House of the Lord and don’t even see anything wrong with it. Hosea 4:6 records: “My people are destroyed for lack of

knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge..." This could be said of many in the CCM Movement. Music can build up people and destroy them!

During the 1950's there was still an honest evaluation and awareness within the local churches that there should be a marked difference between Church music and the world's music. However, the 1960's produced a crossover effect into the Church of the secular, worldly, and rock rhythms of pop culture. This occurred with the hippie and Jesus Movement.

At this point the Church married the musical world system! But God has not called us to marry worldly entertainment with worship. John Blanchard spoke of the presentation of the Gospel with worldly rock music by using a one-liner sentence: "Pop Goes the Gospel." Of course, the power and pop is in the Gospel message (Rom. 1:16) – not in pop culture. When we mirror carnally corrupt culture in our music and worship, it becomes tainted with worldliness.

Satan introduced CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) or the rock idiom (a specific style or expression in music) into the Church during the late 1960's and early 1970's in the midst of a sexual revolution which was encouraged by rock music. It was a style of popular music characterized by strong rhythms, backbeats, excessive syncopation, loudness, emotional sensation, disorder, and hippie mysticism. It was a modernized sound which reflected the same type of musical rebellion (secular rock music) that Satan has historically used to promote sexual rebellion, anti-God rebellion, and anti-establishment rebellion against authority in the lives of people (1950's to the present).

God summons us to separate from Satan's ways of darkness including the musical manipulation of rock music (2 Cor. 6:14-17; Eph. 5:11). Again, we are not to reflect the night but the light. Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:8). God has called us to "shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15). Satan's kingdom is opposed to Christ's kingdom. We should never attempt to revert back to the darkness.

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."

You might say, “CCM does not negatively impact me.” But beware, even the finest Christian has a fleshly nature and is prone to appetites and inclinations that are not spiritual (1 Cor. 10:12). By fleshly we mean are fallen nature or unredeemed part of our humanity. Even if you listen to CCM and somehow conclude you are not overcome or wrongly influenced by the physical, sensual, or soulish part of the music promoted by unnatural rock rhythms, you should still separate from it on the basis of God’s enduring commands to not unite the righteous with the unrighteous, light with darkness, and Satan’s kingdom with God’s kingdom. We must always separate out of obedience and not violate God’s clear commands which is to refuse to conform to the standards set by Satan and the world system (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:11).

Ignorance is not bliss and this is true in the spiritual realm. We should not live in ignorance of God’s commands and fail to obey them (1 Jn. 5:3). Remember that there is still guilt by association for we are commanded to “Abstain from all appearance (every form) of evil” (1 Thess. 5:22). When we operate in the realm of spiritual ignorance, even when committing sins of ignorance (Lev. 4:2; Numb. 15:28), we are not advancing in sanctification and spiritual growth in areas of our music and worship.



### **To Lust or not to Lust?**

Some advocates promoting CCM or those moving in this direction will conclude: “CCM music does not make we want to commit fornication or adultery. So, it cannot be considered sensual to me. One person’s experience is not my experience. Not everyone responds the same way.” Yes, it’s true rock rhythms may not directly cause fornication or adultery to happen in our lives. In fact, to the surprise of many, the Bible separatists I know, including myself, don’t necessarily conclude that every time a person listens to rock rhythms that they are overcome by the Devil and lust.

If that were true, we would be defeated when shopping in a department store, eating at a fast-food restaurant, or attending a baseball game while rock music is blaring in the background. Rock music by default does not cause everyone to rebel against God, lust, and become demonized. It does not necessarily superimpose lust

and rebellion upon people when they listen to it. But that does not minimize the dangers of rock music and give God's approval of this musical system of the world.

To give yourself permission to play CCM because it does not negatively affect you abandons the foundational truth of Bible separation which commands us to separate from anything that is *innately* or *intrinsically* corrupt and anyone who can potentially defile us (2 Co. 6:14-17; Ps. 1; 1 Cor. 15:33). Rock rhythms and expressions were not created by godly people for godly purposes. They were created by ungodly people for ungodly purposes (Jude 1:15) and therefore Christians should not try to Christianize them or any part of the rock culture.

Those defending CCM will conclude that rebellion is not automatically embedded in a sound, that there is no such thing as a demon beat, or that rock backbeats like march music are not fleshly by default. Of course, nobody thinks that you immediately turn to rebellion, lust, eroticism, and that demons jump out to hurt and haunt you when you hear or listen to rock rhythms. Rock music does not by default superimpose lust and rebellion upon people when they listen to it or hear it.



Of course, many will create a strawman or distorted argument around the fact that rock music does not by default always produce lust and rebellion. They do this to jettison the main teaching of Bible separation which commands us to separate from those evil workings and paganized systems which Satan has historically used for his evil purposes (Lev. 18:3; 20:23; Jer. 10:12; Matt. 6:8; 2 Cor. 6:14-17), which taint our Christian testimony with worldliness (1 Tim. 4:12), and at the same time have the potential to cause us spiritual harm (1 Cor. 10:12).

A discerning Christian can generally recognize that rock music as a whole (rock and jazz rhythms, excessive syncopation, disharmony, extreme loudness or over-amplification, heavily amplified bass, lack or loss of melody, hypnotic repetition, shrieking, sliding, scooping, vocal roughness, etc.) has been historically, presently, and purposely fueled by Satan and his emissaries (Eph. 6:12) to bring about spiritual defiance against God and confusion in the lives of millions of people. Therefore, on the basis of Satan's evil workings with rock rhythms and rock music to demoralize humanity and create rebellion against God, the command to not conform (Rom.

12:2) applies to this evil musical system of the world (1 Jn. 2:15). *The rock music beat was designed by rock artists to be sexual. The rhythmic pattern itself was created to carry a permanent moral meaning.* Therefore, God's people should refuse to associate with it in both private and corporate church worship.

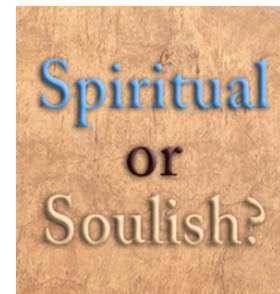
In other words, we should refuse to embrace rock music for enjoyment and worship and not allow it to be part of our personal listening habits, church music, and worship for it is unbecoming to God's character and ways (Ps. 145:17) and in some measure we cooperate, endorse, and promote the very thing Satan uses to produce wickedness and unrighteousness in the lives of people (Eph. 5:11). When embracing CCM and secular rock music we become worldly like Demas who is described as "having loved the present world" (2 Tim. 4:10).

The point is this. Many Christians do not actually fall into lust or sexual sins when listening to different forms of rock music, but the musical rhythms, among other aspects of rock music, are still portraying a sensual message which to some degree makes us complicit with it, associating with and endorsing it, instead of reproofing and correcting it (Eph. 5:11). Furthermore, we in some measure become conformed to the world which the Bible forbids (Rom. 12:2).

Lastly, listening to CCM or secular rock music can set us up for spiritual lapses since the sounds, sinister messages, and sights related to rock music have a downward – not an upward pull. And yes, they can all be steps toward bodily indulgence. This is why we are called upon to "seek those things which are above" (Col. 3:1).

### **Spiritual or Soulsh Worship?**

Worship is responding to all that God is in His eternal character and existence. But this response can become self-centered and designed to fulfill our felt needs in our time of worship instead of truly honoring God. If we want to honestly draw near to God (Ps. 73:28; Heb. 10:22) we won't approach worship to please ourselves but God.



Today the CCM occurring in local churches and at Christian Rock concerts has not changed. CCM emanates from the soulsh or carnal side of our human nature. When we refer to CCM music as being "soulsh" (translated as "natural" and "sensual" in

Jam. 3:15; 1 Cor. 2:14; Jd. 19), we mean that it uses techniques that appeal to the natural, sensual, or carnal (fleshly) side of our human nature (the old unredeemed nature). However, we don't recognize these musical techniques as being soulful/fleshly/carnal or of the baser part of our human existence until we gain discernment (Heb. 5:14).

CCM still produces **personal-pleasure worship** (self-seeking worship), **worldly worship** (self-centered, carnally based, pleasure-seeking worship), **aesthetic worship** (externally attractive, visually and physical appealing, a dramatized or Cinerama type of worship with flashing lights, loud music, dark rooms, smoke, etc.), **ecstatic worship** (artificial emotional stimulation of feelings, an exalted euphoric state of worship that in various ways replaces or overrides rational and spiritual worship, and worship based on truth – Rom. 12:2; Jn. 4:24), **mystical worship** (extreme ecstatic worship, a feeling encounter with God which occurs through musical manipulation, repeated words, movements, and where emotions cause one to manufacture a direct impression of God's presence), **shallow worship** (lacking Scriptural content, depth, and direction) and **informal worship** (dumbing down worship). Of course, this type of carnal or fleshly worship is designed to *experience* something instead of *giving* glory back to God in worship (1 Chron. 16:29; Ps. 29:2; 96:8).

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 (Gal. 5:18) and direction into godly living (Gal. 5:22-23).

Like most things in life, there is a battle between the good and bad elements in music "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (Gal. 5:17). What stands before you and a focused heart in worship is your fleshly old nature. This means we cannot enter into worship with God with a preoccupation with self and our flesh. We are accountable to God and must always offer our best to God in worship and daily living (1 Pet. 2:5). Our goal in music, worship, and everyday living should be to remain "unspotted from the world" (Jam. 1:27).

The worshipper who imbibes rock music is self-seeking and is primarily looking for self-gratification when listening to a certain sound (rock rhythm) and creating a

specific mood or stimulating effect that they think is needed to worship God. God has commanded us to stop the musical mixture between the rebellious sounds of rock music which Satan uses for His unholy purposes with religious based lyrics allegedly designed to sanctify the perverted sounds of a rock culture.

There are only two kinds of worship – spiritual or soulish. As we have seen, mixing the spiritual with the soulish distorts the spiritual. Rock music by design is intrinsically evil and has been used for sensual and evil purposes. Therefore, when you incorporate its sound and basic elements into your worship it becomes tainted or corrupted by the world system which is opposed to God and His righteousness. The “world” is an anti-God system in philosophy, purpose, and practice (1 Jn. 2:15). The Bible sorts out the spiritual and soulish within our human existence (Heb. 4:12). This is why we need to know Scripture and apply it to our personal worship and music.



The description of “spiritual songs” (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) or non-carnal songs are opposite of the soulish or sensual. Apparently even within Paul’s culture there were styles of music that pagans were using which were not compatible with spirituality, whether it pertained to words or sounds. We cannot assume that all music in Paul’s time was simplistic in its words, sounds, and presentation or else he would not address the subject of spiritual songs.

Spiritual songs are not those songs where only the words glorify God, but also the sound. The vehicle (sound) of a musical piece must match the message of the lyrics and not contradict the message being sung. CCM, with its worldly techniques, are never good. Half and half (good words with immoral rhythmic confusion) is partial disobedience and is still disobedience in God’s eyes. In fact, any sensual techniques introduced into a song essentially corrupt the whole song because it is no longer 100 percent righteous for “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal. 5:9).

The use of drums or bass guitars to create rock rhythms is the primary tool by which carnality is displayed in the music, and ultimately, through the listeners body movements in response to the drums or bass guitars being played. Carnality or the flesh wins out in this type of musical expression. When adding the heavy emphasis on the beat the music becomes sensual for it reflects the worldly music of sensuality that Satan has used to corrupt societal living.

Spiritual songs are in conflict with the sensual and are contrasted with what is termed as soulish 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 (soulish), and devilish." Paul talks about the "natural" or soulish/sensual man (1 Cor. 2:14). Jude also uses the term "sensual" or soulish (Jude 19) which refers to that part of man's existence where the sin nature functions and thrives.

A sensual person is actually a soulish person which means they are allowing their life to be dominated by the fleshly and soulish part of their human existence. The Bible teaches that fleshly lusts, which originate from the old nature, 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, but also the constitutional makeup within us that encompasses our entire personality and humanness as it relates to everyday life.

Here are some important questions. Is your music spiritual or soulish? Is it a mixture of these two elements? Is your music set-apart or sanctified (1 Thess. 4:3-4) and non-worldly (meaning different)? Does your music in some way reflect pagan music and appeal to the old nature? You need to start relooking at the music you are listening to and begin to be musically "transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2).

Colossians 3:2 reminds you to "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." By design, rock music is "sensual" and "earthly" in nature (Jam. 3:15). Many Christians demand a type of music that feeds the senses and old nature, which entertains, and pleases them instead of listening to music that feeds the spirit and reflects the new nature. Let's think about this. People can respond to an external, momentary, exciting, musical stimulus based on rock rhythms and entertaining music but not respond 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" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) which are opposite and free from the expressions of carnal, fleshly, and worldly songs. Sensuality and spirituality are exact opposites. Conflict between the flesh and the new nature, the flesh and the Holy Spirit, is a subject of considerable importance and discussion in Scripture (Col. 3:2; Gal. 5:16; Rom. 8:5).

Man's spirit is the "candle of the LORD" (Pr. 20:27) where man perceives God and is open to God's leading and direction. **Spiritual songs are 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). However, soulish and entertaining music is incompatible with the spirit of man and can overcome the spiritual part of a Christian's existence when they are lulled to sleep by the super-stimulation of pleasurable feelings.

To state it succinctly, spiritual songs, as opposed to fleshly songs, are those songs that originate from the spiritual part of man's existence, and which are also manufactured and directed by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:18). Therefore, the understanding of "spiritual" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) would also connote the work and result of the filling or control of the Holy 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. Paul taught elsewhere that we are to "worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3). A believer is to worship the Father in his human spirit by the Holy Spirit who indwells him. Both concepts about the "spirit" are true and occur inwardly.

Of course, those attending a CCM concert might say, "I really feel the Holy Spirit's presence." However, a Christian must be very careful to identify the true source of his feelings. The work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is not dependent upon a certain type of rhythm that is being played at a CCM concert or in church. Just the opposite may be true. The mixture of the sounds of rock music with Christian lyrics is really a struggle between the Spirit and the flesh within us (Gal. 5:17). Many experiences are attributed to the Holy Spirit that do not originate with Him. Sometimes Christians do not have an accurate awareness of this inward struggle between the flesh and the Spirit, and they confuse the work of the flesh for the work of the Spirit.

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.”

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 reminds us that “all things edify not.”

Our desire for worship may be nothing more than seeking artificial satisfaction through music that gives us an emotional, carnal, and physical response. We want to experience CCM with our bodies and feelings which means the physical and carnal overtakes the spiritual. However, this type of satisfaction is short-lived which means we need further exposure to the same type of music in order to remain carnally satisfied. Of course, our satisfaction (the abundant life) comes from our relationship with the Lord (Jn. 10:10; Phil. 3:10) – not the satisfaction of our carnal nature. The artificially induced high received from rock music is a cheap substitute for the real thing! There is no replacement for true spiritual fulfillment.

The “spiritual songs” (non-carnal songs) that reflect 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. At this point we become sensual, flesh-pleasing people regardless of what our mouths are saying or what we think our heart motivation is. We are reacting to carnal rock music in a carnal manner regardless of what the lyrics communicate.

Reacting to rock rhythms in this way speaks volumes against the filling or controlling influence of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18). 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” or self-control (Gal. 5:23). By the way, music created and controlled by the Holy Spirit will reflect gentleness, goodness, and help maintain emotional stability and control which means it won’t master our lives (Gal. 5:22-23).

Frank Garlock states:

“Today the melody (spiritual part) and harmony (emotional-intellectual part) is not only overshadowed, but nearly smothered out of existence by the overpowering, pulsating (physical part). We have become obsessed with the physical and our music, secular and even sacred, reflects that obsession.”

The human spirit where God’s life and nature reside responds to the devotional aspect of the music whereas the soul and body respond to the rhythm. Essentially, if the body and physical things are a priority in one’s life and music over the spiritual, then this person is soulish and is therefore following the dictates of the old nature over the new nature.



Spiritual songs (Col. 3:16) are offered up to God as “spiritual sacrifices” (1 Pet. 2:5) 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.

The unnatural and abused rhythms of rock music create tension, confusion, and 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. A song cannot be acceptable to God when it conveys a message that is clearly contrary to God’s nature. 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 not. 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 (worship) without blemish (Exo. 12:5). This means God is looking for us to "offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5). We are not to present to Him fleshly worship. A Christian should always strive to do his best in all things and therefore "approve things that are excellent" (Phil. 1:10) which includes listening to wholesome music in worship. It is worship that is not tainted by the world.

Jesus told the Samaritan woman that she did not know how to worship from a Biblical and reverent perspective ("**Ye worship ye know not**" – Jn. 4:24). He said His people should know better than to worship with unacceptable sacrifices, but they still practiced this type of contemptible worship.

Malachi 1:8

"And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, *is it* not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, *is it* not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts."



In Malachi 1:10 God concludes:

"... I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering (*your unholy worship*) at your hand."

The people 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 and music 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 general anti-God rebellion in the lives of millions of people.

### **Dancing for Jesus or a Diversion from Reverence?**



Is dancing to rock beats a form of worship? The fact that rock music was created to be fleshly means that Christians should stop looking for proof texts to support pandemonium and irreverent corporate dancing to perverted and sensual rock rhythms during sponsored rock

concerts and in their local churches. The claim is made that dancing is a legitimate form of congregational worship. Some common verses used to support dancing to rock music are 2 Samuel 6:12-14 and 1 Chronicles 15:29 which speaks of how “David danced before the LORD with *all* his might” (2 Sam. 6:14). However, to associate and apply David’s leaping and skipping in joy to the modern rock dance in the churches today is using God’s Word for one’s own end and purpose. It is huckstering God’s Word or “handling the word of God deceitfully” (2 Cor. 4:2).

Several observations can be made about dance.

First, although the word “dance” (2 Samuel) 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 leaping and twirling about which was an outward expression of his inner joy.

Second, there is no record of David celebrating with other people in what we know today as modern group dance to the sounds of rock music. This is ludicrous.

Third, the Scripture informs us that David danced on the way to the Tabernacle as he moved the ark (2 Samuel 6:12-14). 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. This means we can jump for joy “before the LORD” (2 Sam. 6:14) in our daily routine of life but this joyous jump was never adopted as formal worship.

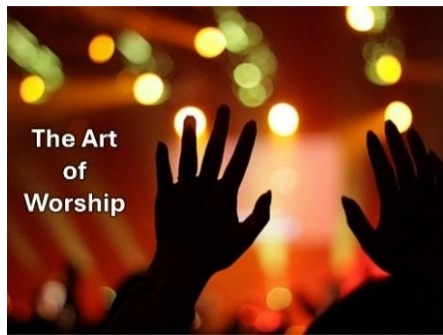
Fourth, it should also be noted that none of the later kings, priests, or prophets instituted any kind of formal dance associated with Jewish worship. David did not do this and neither did any of his descendants. Neither David nor his priests took David’s dancing incident as a template for how worship 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.

It should be noted that verses which relate to the Jewish custom of dance never occurred in the sanctuary (Ps. 149:1, 3; 150:1, 4), never occurred in corporate gatherings, did not occur between men and women (Ex. 15:20; 1 Sam. 18:6), and

was never accompanied with rock music which in itself generates a fleshly response in people.

There is no record of corporate dancing to rock music or the so-called dancing in the Spirit found anywhere in the Old Testament or New Testament local churches (1 Cor. 14) for the obvious reasons that it does not express reverence toward God and can lead to disorder and confusion (Heb. 12:28). Christians need to get off their dance bandwagon and stop trying to promote their fleshly worship by misusing Scriptural texts. They are using the Bible to support their unscriptural and fleshly forms of worship. The type of dancing at CCM concerts and in charismatic churches is an outward manifestation of the inward effect of carnal music.

### **Artistic or Internal Worship?**



At this point, I would be remiss or neglectful if I did not briefly deal with artistic forms of worship. Artistic worship is the use of creative, artistic expressions, such as painting, dance, drama, and design, lighting, staging, and a theater-type atmosphere, which is used to honor God and meditate on Scripture, so one can supposedly connect deeper with God. Aesthetics in worship

refers to the visual and sensory elements that are supposed to enhance the experience of worship, including art, stage presence, and the overall environment.

Aesthetic worshippers believe that genuine praise needs a *physical* dimension greater than only unison singing, instrumental playing, and preaching. It assumes that God as the original Creator and artist or 'aesthete' is sitting in Heaven and looking down with appreciation at the skill and beauty that we bring before Him in artistic worship. However, the aesthetic idea of worship in its extreme forms is opposed to worshipping "in spirit and truth" (Jn. 4:24).

Words and thoughts are everything in worship – nothing external should replace worship based on truth and which occurs inwardly. In fact, the idea of aesthetic worship is really no different than medieval Catholicism. The Church of Rome, with all her masses, images, processions, stained glass windows, costly and colorful robes, Gregorian chants, and complex proceedings, makes an offering of worship by these things.

Aesthetic worship has now flooded into evangelical and Protestant churches as people have been persuaded by the main architects and promoters of new worship to express much of their worship via the creativity of CCM music, dance, and other bodily movements and drama, or as someone said, “through encounter and impact.” The church growth movement has adopted musical entertainment (religious artistry) as the chief method of attracting outsiders, and the CCM songs created by artists is justified as part of the worship experience.

Peter Masters wrote:

“To put it bluntly, aesthetic worship is a huge stride back to Rome, and has no place in the true church of Jesus Christ. It challenges and spoils spiritual worship, and is contrary to every praise instruction in the New Testament. When we evaluate new worship, we must do so in terms of those biblical principles recovered (by God’s mercy) at the time of the Reformation, the first of these being that worship is spiritual, and not an aesthetic performance.”

Many times self-expression and performance is confused with God-exaltation. It’s rather interesting that many writers promoting CCM worship actually use language which depicts God as a satisfied viewer of a “performance.” Of course, worship has nothing to do with performance and entertainment. The Reformers rejected artistic skill and beauty as a valid expression of worship as they reacted to pagan forms of worship which did not promote truth and spirituality.

Contemporary worship is fully aesthetic in purpose and practice. God is the audience and the worshippers are performers and one cannot truly worship without the theatrics. We must understand that worship is not some kind of aesthetic, physical, and glamorous activity that occurs outwardly, but an inward occurrence based on truth (Jn. 4:24).

Frank Gaebelin 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.”

In protest to those who refuse to promote the kind of theatrics or aesthetic of CCM worship, the claim is often made that worship in Old Testament times was rich in actions and artistry ordained by God, and such worship can hardly be disqualified

today. However, it is not true that Old Testament services included works of beauty and skill as a direct expression of worship. In fact, the symbolism in the design of the Tabernacle and Temple, as well as the ceremonial performed by the priests, represented the work of Christ for them. These things amounted to lessons, not necessary vehicles of worship as CCM artists conclude.

The main argument given by CCM artists is that they are creators like God who have designed a new form of worship that is changing the lives of millions of people. However, no form of art changes people, only the Gospel (Rom. 1:16) and God's sanctifying Word transforms people and makes them into new creations of God (John 17:17; 2 Cor. 5:17).

So where do you draw the line with the artistic expressions being used in worship today which often are saying, "Look at me or this" instead of "Look at God?" I'm certainly not talking about a Christmas play where children act out the parts of Mary and Joseph or a musical cantata that contains scenes with Bible characters but the kind of artistry that promotes a theatrical atmosphere to get people spell-bound and influenced by the outward sights and sounds of CCM artists with their rock rhythms, flashing lights, stage smoke, gyrational movements in dance, and their overall entertaining performance on stage. I'm referring to the showbiz type of Christianity.

Let's begin with dance, which we have already addressed. Dance is not a legitimate art form that is designed to communicate truth and bring glory to God and true edification to others. This is why dancing is not mentioned in the New Testament local churches as part of worship. This is not an argument from silence, but an argument based upon facts! The early church did not worship with dance.

What about raising hands during worship? For one thing, there is no record of the entire congregation of Israel raising hands during *corporate* gatherings of worship. The priests did as they served within the Lord's House (Ps. 134:1-3) and some others raised hands in their personal or private worship (Ps. 28:2; 63:4; 119:48; 134:2; 141:2; 143:6; Lam. 3:41).

Furthermore, there is no mention of the early church raising hands in worship and the practice was unknown in the succeeding generations of churches simply because it was not a developed part of worship in corporate gatherings. Texts such

as 1 Timothy 2:8 (“holy hands”) and Hebrews 12:12 (“lift up the hands”) are not referencing the literal raising of hands but are figures of speech of what a person does with his or her spiritual life. They are speaking metaphorically of worshipping with a clean heart and life (“according to the cleanness of my hands” - Ps. 18:20).

The lifting of hands in a church service or at a CCM concert can digress into more aesthetic (artistic) forms of worship which are designed to capture the senses and not the spiritual part of man’s nature (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). In other words, artistic and *external* worship can begin to be emphasized over *internal* worship (Jn. 4:24). People may think they need outward stimuli to worship God. Advocates of aesthetic worship argue that physical expression enhances the worship experience. But this is not true. It only enhances the physical but not the spiritual.



The extreme forms of artistic worship and expression (externally attractive, visually and physical appealing, the dramatized worship of interpreted dancing) is not mentioned in Scripture because of the entertainment and pseudo excitement it can bring as it mimics in some measure worldly

entertainment. CCM is showbiz with the trappings of Christianity. It’s the entertainment syndrome that has engulfed many aspects of the Church. Too much aesthetics can detract from the core spiritual aspects of worship. Many contemporary worship services incorporate aesthetic elements, such as elaborate stage designs, lighting, and music styles that evoke emotions over spirituality. The end result is the physical overtakes the spiritual.

Aesthetic worship refers to the idea that genuine praise to God should include a physical dimension, emphasizing beauty and artistic expression in worship practices. This approach contrasts with the belief that worship should be focused solely on spiritual thoughts and heartfelt devotion. Our worship should not be built around the outward form but the inward heart (Ps. 119:10).

Music which plays on the emotions or highly emphasizes the artistic dimension with concocted rock sounds, rhythms, and outward displays of flashy entertainment, appeals to the soulish nature. One might argue that the artistic dimension in music

has its legitimate place, but in music that place must always be subordinate to the devotional dimension. When appeals to the soul and body are given higher priority in music, this results in music and worship lacking spirituality.

Here is the point. God does not want us to dress up the Gospel in fleshly, emotional, or heavy artistic appeals rooted in worldly rock rhythms created by sensual rock artists. This is because it blankets the power of the Gospel. Musical presentation which is heaviest in its physical, emotional, or artistic appeal is inconsistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and we should unapologetically avoid this type of music. In other words, we should make sure all of our music and actions are that which “becometh the gospel of Christ” (Phil.1:27) or that which is worthy and suitable to represent the Gospel message which frees us from the power of sin.

CCM is powerful, but it’s power of a different kind that has nothing do with the power of the Gospel to free men from their sins (Rom. 1:16). It has the power to make people feel good, the power to make people jump and feel bouncy, and the power to help them forget everything as they enter a euphoric state.

This continuing trend has sparked important debate about the balance between aesthetic and spiritual worship. Biblically and historically, aesthetic worship has been viewed as a deviation from traditional worship principles, which emphasize worshipping “in spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:24). Focusing too much on aesthetics can detract from the core spiritual aspects of worship. And such is the case with rock rhythms and the mentality of “lights, camera, action.” When you enter many churches today it’s like entering a movie theater where artists perform theatrics in front of the people for 45 minutes.

### **Seeking Truth or Proof-Texting?**

Beware of using prooftexts (certain Bible texts) to give unwarranted approval of your CCM and carnal forms of external and so-called artistic forms of worship. As already mentioned, David’s joyful dance or twirling (2 Sam. 6:14) is one prooftext used for dancing to rock rhythms in the local churches, but such a practice is never once seen within the local assemblies during the apostolic churches and later development of the churches. There are no references to it – not one. Crickets! Silence! Again, this is not merely an argument

***Biblical Proof-texting***

from silence, but an argument based upon fact. Christians did not dance in church! There is no record of this anywhere in Scripture.

Dance is not an art form that is designed to communicate truth and bring glory to God and true edification to others. This is why dancing is not mentioned in the New Testament local churches as part of worship. The early church did not worship with dance. There are references to singing, praying, reading Scripture, praising, saying "Amen" and preaching, but no reference to dancing (1 Cor. 14; Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 4:2).

Several go to verses that people have used to condone their CCM worship is when the saints shouted loudly as they worshipped the Lord (Ps. 47:1; 100:1). This is wrongly interpreted to mean one can legitimately worship with loud rock rhythms created by drums and synthesizers because this aligns with the principle that music can be loud. Of course, singing with great zeal and opening our voices to give God praise is not the same thing that occurs at CCM rock concerts. Again, this is finding prooftexts in God's Word to support one's own personal goals and agenda in their time of worship.

Another popular prooftext used by CCM artists is what Paul said about becoming "**all things to all men, that I might by all means save some**" (1 Cor. 9:22). Somehow, they interpret this to mean that we should load up our bodies with tattoos, body-piercings, and play music that sounds like secular rock music so we can reach the unsaved for Christ. They conclude that we must *become like them to win them*. Of course, this is a debunked philosophy (Col. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:20) and misuse of Scripture.

As in 1 Corinthians 10:23 ("All things are lawful for me"), Paul was referencing *amoral* (neutral) issues - not *worldly* issues. These issues did not include adopting new methods of worship that were carnal and contrary to God's Word and holiness in order to please people and tickle their ears with rock music. Paul would never have crossed the line to appeal to people's carnal or fleshly tendencies. He did not become sensual, carnal, and worldly to win others to Christ. 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 and truth "for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10).

Ex-drug addicts don't return to a lifestyle of drugs to win people to Christ who are on drugs. Ex-drunkards do not become a drunkard again to win drunkards to Christ. You don't need body-piercings to identify with someone who has twenty body-

piercings so you might win them to Christ. In a similar way, there is no need to play rock music to win the unsaved to Christ who like rock music. This whole idea is nonsensical and is an unbiblical approach to evangelism.

God has not called us to become like the world to win people to Christ. In fact, both Jesus and John said the world would in some measure hate and not like us when we take our stand for Christ (Jn. 15:18; 1 Jn. 3:13). God has not called us to please the masses but demonstrate light, holiness, and the Gospel truth to them (Matt. 5:13-14).

CCM advocates misuse the phrase “all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” in order to sanctify their flesh-pleasing worship. In 1 Kings 12:28, Jeroboam misused the Bible to promote his own deviant form of worship by basically quoting Exodus 32:4 (“these be thy gods”). This was something Aaron had said to the people to justify worshipping the golden calf. Jeroboam shares the same worldly philosophy to justify Israel’s deviation from God’s Scriptural and obedient form of worship (“behold thy gods”). It’s interesting that Aaron professed to be worshipping the LORD by means of the calf (Exod. 32:5). This reminds us that we must beware of self-deception in the area of worship.

Acts 16:25-31 is another proof-text that is commonly used to promote the use of rock music as a tool or medium to win the unsaved. The claim is made that Paul and Silas singing hymns in Acts 16:25-27, proves that music was used in evangelism. But this is not the case. When Paul evangelized, he only used the Word and trusted in the power of the Holy Spirit to change the lives of people (1 Cor. 2:1-5). By the way, only the prisoners heard Paul and Silas sing, the keeper of the prison who was saved was actually sleeping through the songs of praise and was only awakened when the earth began to shake! The great preacher of the Gospel did not rely on music to win souls (Rom. 1:16). Rock music was not a tool in Paul’s evangelism chest.

Another proof-text used to promote rock music for evangelism is David’s experience in Psalm 40.

Psalm 40:3

“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.”

The CCM artists claim this verse speaks of evangelism through a new song of spiritual lyrics put to rock rhythms. Of course, this is a clear case of eisegesis (reading into the Bible something that is not there). This argument falls flat on its face.

First, David's new song of deliverance did not refer to a song of salvation from the deliverance of sin. Instead, it referred to David's own physical deliverance from his enemies and Saul which also resulted in his own spiritual deliverance from a state of overcoming depression, anxiety, and fear.

Second, the text says that "many shall see *it*" (not hear it). In other words, they would see the spiritual impact or effect the new song had on David's life. David's deliverance resulted not only in a song of praise to God but an overall testimony to others within the Israelite community. His changed demeanor and life could easily be seen and brought a positive impact upon others to put their faith in God as they faced the calamities of life. In other words, his change of life would encourage others to renew their confidence in Yahweh.

Let's get serious about studying the Bible. Psalm 40 has nothing to do with salvation, synthesizers, and secular rock beats being brought into Christian music.

### **Legalism or Liberty?**



CCM artists and those who listen to this type of music usually raise arguments that revolve around the words legalism and liberty.

First, there is the legalist argument. Legalism has become a theological cussword in the world of Christianity today. 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 rather 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; 7:4-25). 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 to 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) while speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), does not constitute that person to be an unloving and merciless Pharisee 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 "holier than thou" while attempting to snuff out the true liberties of other believers. This is because Christians can often confuse liberty with the flesh (Gal. 5:13).

The "legalistic" argument is often used as another giant smokescreen designed to sanctify the CCM of others and give Christian's the permission to do almost anything without being held accountable for their unseparated and unscrupulous actions. Many have an open-ended view of Christian liberty (Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet. 2:16).

Second, there is also the liberty argument. We are said to have the liberty to listen to CCM since musical expression is a "gray area" or "non-essential" matter (Romans 14). Of course, this alleged musical liberty argument is misconstrued since God places a premium on the doctrine of sanctification (John 17:17; 1 Thess. 4:3) which extends to the area of separated, non-worldly, non-rock music, and pure worship. 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 "gray" terminology (non-essential, gray areas, liberty) to justify a type of worship which in some ways reflects rebellion/carnality/worldliness and which is a diversion from the true type of worship that God accepts (Jn 4:24). Many Christians want to live in the gray instead of the black and white.

The "gray area argument" which many attribute to Romans 14:1-5 (disputable matters) does not apply to adopting the rock idiom as part of one's life. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5) does not apply to imbibing

rock beats and the other elements of rock music into your worship and personal life. This is an obvious misapplication of this text for it overrides the clear command for Bible separation (2 Cor. 6:14-17). God's Word does not contradict itself even though some create confusion and contradiction when attempting to mix the incompatible realms of worldly methods with spiritual themes.

The fact that some believers have a stronger conscience in some areas is not referring to possessing a conscience that can play Christian Rock Music or even secular rock music. This is actually a sign of what might be determined as a defiled conscience (Tit. 1:15). Many imply that "the strong" (those who listen and worship with rock beats) should not flaunt their freedom (their liberty to listen to rock music). They are called to protect the weak (those who reject using rock music in all of its forms). So essentially, the strong Christians can be part of "a flock that rocks" whereas the weaker Christians will remain in those churches that are not on the rocks. This is a very distorted and meaningless example of weaker and stronger brothers.

Many will conclude that a Christian with a weaker conscience is someone who rejects rock rhythms in worship services even though they have been historically created and maintained by Satan to promote his own darkness and evil agenda in the world. However, unlike meat and Saturday worship (the basic context of Romans 14), music is not amoral (neutral – without morality). Therefore, worshipping with the sounds of rock music is not a valid example and is an illegitimate comparison to eating meat and on what day we worship. In other words, listening to CCM and any rock music is not a disputable matter. There is no gray area when it comes to separating from Satan's agenda and workings in the world (Jam. 4:4).

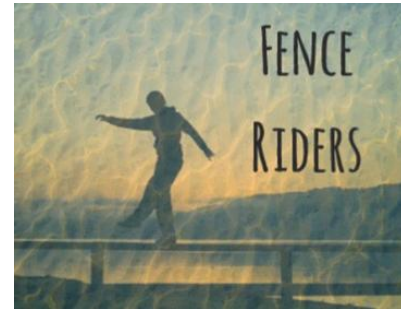
Al Smith said:

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

Rock music, including CCM, is like fast food which eventually clogs your spiritual arteries. We must seek excellence in all that we do and therefore represent Biblical musical expression in the best possible light. We must take time to learn what Biblical music is and "take time to be holy" in all of our musical choices and worship (1 Pet. 1:15; 2 Pet. 3:11).

A man who was saved from the rock musical lifestyle came up to me and said, “Preacher, the music that is being promoted in the Church today is a lousy substitute of my old way of life.”

He was right. CCM is a cheap imitation of worldly music. 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.



Bob Jones gave the illustration of a soldier in the civil war who tried to save his neck by wearing a confederate jacket and union pants at the same time. The Yankees fired at his jacket and the Rebels shot at his legs! It never pays to be a fence rider or compromiser! You won't win either way.

Excellence in our music and worship means that spiritual songs (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19) 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 offbeat rock rhythms, or backbeats, strong jazz-type rhythms, the excessive or misuse of syncopation, a distorted or lost melody, this creates musical or rhythmic confusion, and when they are accompanied with excessive repetition, loudness, and strong vocal inflections, they lose their spiritual nature and become hypnotic, carnal, and entertaining in their expression.

William L. Banks wrote: “In some strange psychological manner the pronounced beat...touches a responsive chord in the lower nature of man.” 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 comments:

“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.”

### Feelings or Truth?



If something feels spiritual, is it really spiritual? The answer is no because truth must always be applied to our spiritual experiences to make them truly spiritual (Jn. 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Subjective experience cannot be allowed to win

out over objective truth. Many Christians sacrifice truth and theology for feelings. We live in a generation that must feel rather than reflect. Self-expression and individual feeling often becomes the purpose of worship. In fact, most CCM boils down to a preoccupation with self. But for the Christian, all aspects of our life should be Bible-based. You can argue about your feelings, but you cannot successfully argue against the Scriptures, which call for Bible separation from ungodly music or music that is unlike God (2 Cor. 6:14-17). Feelings cannot become our spiritual gauge for what is right and wrong. There is a real danger in this.

Emotionalism (feelings) unifies people in churches and at CCM concerts. Truth often takes a backseat to emotions and euphoric feelings. Emotions can be stirred without the soul (man’s inner being – his mind, heart, intellect, and will) being fed good spiritual food. A Christian whose life is built on emotionalism without Bible truth resembles an amusement park roller coaster. He is up and down and twists and turns through life without any rhyme or reason.

Alan Griffith writes:

“Music can create emotional and sensual ties that are very difficult to break. That is why the battle of Christian music continues to rage.”

Worship and music should never become what someone has called “a mindless emotional bath” as a result of hypnotic repetition and driving beats. “I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Cor. 14:15). Despite this Scriptural principle and warning, some Christians conclude, “It can’t be wrong if it feels right.” Yes, it can be wrong – very wrong! CCM can promote false feelings of spirituality. You might say, “I feel closer to God when I listen to CCM because it pleases me.” However, God does not ask us to “feel good” or possess a certain musical mood but to obey Him which sometimes calls for denying ourselves (Lk. 9:23) of musical preferences and pleasures that do not align with God’s truth, character, and ways.

Richard Quebedeaux, in his book “The Worldly Evangelicals,” states: “It is profoundly significant that evangelicals, even the more conservative among them, have accepted the rock mode. This acceptance obviously indicates a further chapter in the death of self-denial and world rejection among them.”

Remember that feelings can deceive us, but worship based upon the truth of Bible separation (Rom. 12:2) maintains a rational worship (Rom. 12:1) - not merely a feeling type of worship. 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. Christians often worship at the altar of *felt needs*.

A child may *want* something (a candy bar), but what he *needs* may be different (a bowl of soup and a sandwich). The point is this. We must remember that music is not for sensual pleasure but for spiritual enrichment. This is why Scriptural songs are labeled as “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. However, since music does appeal to our emotions, many approach the subject of Christian music by digging in their heels on an emotional level, instead of examining their music on the basis of the revealed will of God in Scripture.

We must remember that “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jer. 17:9). In other words, we can follow the deceptive feelings of the heart instead of God’s ultimate will and purpose in music and worship. Strong emotional impressions must always be tested (1 Thess. 5:21) to make sure they are founded upon truth and not merely based upon fleshly

responses to a certain sound which might also be generated by the fallen angelic world of demons designed to take us away from righteous living (1 Jn. 4:1; Eph. 6:12).

We should ask some questions. What is the source and direction of our emotions? By what means are our emotions being stirred? If our emotions are generated by rock beats and rhythms, and the rock idiom in general, then we need to examine our emotions (1 Thess. 5:22) for they are not aligning with the truth of Bible separation, the call to separate from a musical expression that was created to promote rebellion in the lives of people.

Of course, discernment and separation is not about rejecting all feelings and emotional reactions. God made us emotional beings – not puppets! But we must channel our emotions in a way that reflects truth, the truth of Bible separation from musical corruption. None of our emotions should contradict the correcting aspect of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17) for God doesn't give private emotional impressions that overrule clear Bible commands regarding separating the clean from the unclean, light from darkness, and Satan's kingdom from God's kingdom (2 Cor. 14-17).

Our God-given emotional sensitivity and sensations must by default align with the soundness of Scripture. Our emotional impressions must be Spirit-led (Gal. 5:16, 25) and Word-directed (Ps. 119:9, 11; 105; Jn. 16:13; 17:17). We must test every impression, no matter how strong it might be, by the written truth of God's Word. Many impressions (feelings) might not form Christlikeness within us (Gal. 4:19) but only feed a certain mood we want to experience which essentially creates a fake energy.

I can like certain things in my flesh and become emotionally attached to them (rock music, pornography, gambling, etc.) but of course this does not make what I like "approved unto God" (2 Tim. 2:15). The flesh and heart is very deceptive (Jer. 17:9; Jam. 1:14-15; 3:15) and many times our emotions become intertwined with fleshly likes which are at war with our souls (1 Pet. 2:11). In the end, it's not what I like but what God likes and approves on the basis of Scriptural separation.

One thing we must be careful about is confusing lively with worldly. Our church music does not need to go to the funeral parlor. It does not need to be stale or dead

but joyful (Ps. 100:1) as we embrace the basic tenants of musical separation from the world of rock music. God has not called us to emotional stillness but to correctly funnel our emotions in the way of truth. Joy and energy does not compromise God's holiness. So, the idea that Sacred Music (non-CCM, separated and reverent music) is dead music and devoid of delight or enjoyment because it does not reflect the world of rock music and entertainment is another strawman argument. It's a distorted argument misrepresenting the truth about the joy and blessing of Sacred Music.

Just because we reject the rock idiom in our worship does not mean we sing about the resurrection of Christ with the energy of a budget committee! We are not afraid to sing happy and faster music that reflects the Creator's musical order. In the church where I pastor, we have instruments playing while others are singing and we blend together sending up a joyful expression of worship before God. We don't walk on eggshells and are bound to emotional bondage or paralysis as some suggest, fearing that emotions are something foreign to worship. We simply do not allow the emotional element to override the truth element.

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."

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 (Traditional Sacred Music). 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 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 listen 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.

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 sensation of feeling does not make something spiritual. The sacrificing of truth over feelings is a dangerous path to follow. So, “spiritual songs” (Eph. 5:19) are not merely feeling songs, but songs that are rooted in the truth and which reflect the new nature, new life, and Holy Spirit’s filling.

Pastor David Moss correctly states:

“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.”

### **Crucifying or Catering to the Flesh?**

Of course, we must remember that fleshly or soulful 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. Everybody wants instant gratification when they listen to CCM instead of true spiritual reflection on God and His ways.

**JUDGING: BIBLICAL  
VS. FLESHLY**

Paul Downey remarks:

“Too many of us select our music on the basis of carnal enjoyment rather than spiritual edification.”

The Bible says, “And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24). What is true of our *position* in Christ can now become our *practice* as we live for Christ (Gal. 2:20). Because of the Spirit’s power we can refuse to play into the hands of the old nature which is constantly promoting worship with the purpose of carnal fulfillment and enjoyment. This is why we must in a practical way put to death the flesh in our lives (Rom. 8:13) as we “yield” ourselves to God (Rom. 6:13, 16).

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/soulsh responses to this type of music.

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?”

We must 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!

When we were children, we used to play in the creek at my grandmother's house. We would splash and play with boats and make the water muddy. Today Christian artists are notorious for muddying the water between secular rock music and Christian lyrics by incorporating rock rhythms into their musical selections. The medium (rock rhythms) do not fit the message (spiritual lyrics). They are at opposite ends of the spiritual pole.

The words can often be virtually disregarded and not heard properly in the midst of the loud volume and chaotic rhythms of songs, but the musical sound by itself sends the real message of rebellion against God. In other words, a musically perverted sound can hijack the Biblical message being conveyed in the words of a song. When rock is linked with a Christian message, the emotionally charged impact of the music can very easily overtake and dilute the true spiritual message being taught.

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

not only disqualified from being “spiritual songs” because of their lack of spiritual words and content, but also because of the musical sound of rebellion that is played.

We should not borrow from the stagnant 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). Many Christians put up with things they should put out of their lives (Rev. 2:15, 20). They are *tolerant* toward rock music and eventually it has a worldly and corrupting influence upon them. This is why we must separate from it in our worship, local churches, and personal lives.



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 have made an idol of tolerance.”

The Church has created an atmosphere of *leniency*. The easy-going, doctrinally-generic, and musically-maligned local churches are becoming the norm.

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. 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.”

God’s command is to “flee these things” (the evil things), including rock music in all of its forms, and “follow after righteousness” (1 Tim. 6:11)

R. B. Ouellette once said:

“Find out what God likes and do it. Find out what God does not like and don’t do it!”

Sadly, instead of *fleeing* many Christians are *following* the perversions of rock music. In fact, many are worshipping their form of worship instead of really worshipping God!

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.”

## TESTIMONY

In 1990, a booklet was published documenting the testimonies of 44 young people between the ages of 15 and 23, who have been negatively affected by Contemporary Christian Music. Time after time these individuals spoke about becoming numb or desensitized to the music, becoming addicted to the beat, having a lack of inner peace, experiencing immoral thoughts and sensual feelings, a desire for a stronger and heavier beat, and rebelling against parental standards with both CCM and secular rock music.

Matthew Walker confirms that “Many Christian teens mature into flesh-oriented adults” because they began a journey into listening to CCM and secular rock music while in their teens and continue to practice the same bad listening habits into their adult life.” Teenagers often begin their rebellion when they first listen to CCM, against their parent’s approval, and then gradually move to heavier rock music because CCM does not satisfy them. It is a shame that CCM is used as a tool of rebellion against parents and God in general.

CCM uses the same sensual sound and delivery techniques in rock music that today are common in many churches, which can be another contributing factor to moral failures within the Church. Of course, even if certain songs of CCM do not produce the same effects or results in your life, you should separate from it on the basis of unholy mixture (2 Cor. 6:14-17), crossing the line into worldliness, and setting yourself up for greater musical manipulation with immoral music. God has not called us to imitate the rebellious and corrupt musical styles and morals of ungodly men and women. Jesus taught, “Be not ye therefore like unto them” (Matt. 6:8).

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 (Eph. 2:2) but the character of God and spirituality (Eph. 5:18-19).

## **MUSIC INSTRUCTION**

Here is an important fact. 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, carnality, and rebellion in their music?

A song may be saying something acceptable lyrically but not convey the same message in its sound and presentation. This is a contradiction of God's character (1 Pet. 1:15-16) and God's Word on Bible separation which condemns unholy mixture (2 Cor. 6: 14-17). Yes, we can in some measure 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 is his inner control center (1 Cor. 14:32) and 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 our emotional and physical response of the human body.

Christian music should help strengthen the spiritual part of man's existence by feeding the new nature rather than appealing to the old nature, which is manifested through a carnal and physical response to rock music. The issue is choosing spiritual music, non-fleshly appealing music, over music that does appeal to our flesh or old nature. Music that is born out of rebellion is anti-Christian from its very inception

and cannot be redeemed for Christian use. 1 Corinthians 2:15 concludes: “But he that is spiritual judgeth (discerns) all things ...” which would include properly judging the difference between fleshy (soulish) and spiritual music.

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.”

Yes, there really is a difference. Blessed are those who can see and hear the difference!

### **Separation or Spiritual Compromise?**

The apostle Paul in Ephesians 4 and 5 commands us to live a separated life when he states: “walk not as other Gentiles walk” (4:17); “put off concerning the former conversation the old man” (4:22); “be renewed in the spirit of your mind . . . put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (4:23, 24). What is your musical diet like? God’s people are still calling for the leeks and garlic of Egypt (the old life) when they embrace a rock idiom (Numb. 11:5).



Satan greases the tracks when we begin to listen to CCM and other forms of rock music. It’s not long before we slide into deeper forms of rock music and lose our spiritual edge. 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. Normally it is little musical compromises that lead to bigger compromises.

Dr. Fred Moritz said:

“To forsake biblical militance is to start down a slippery slope that will inevitably lead to disaster in theology, association, and practice.”

Gradualism can result in catastrophism! So don’t open the door to CCM for it will lead you down a worldly path that can slowly break down your spiritual defenses to godly living and worship and to God’s Word which clearly denounces worldly worship and living (Titus 2:12).

Normally it's a little musical compromise that leads to bigger compromises. But let us remember that God never compromises on any issue! Music is like fire in the sense that it can warm or destroy. However, if you begin to play with fire, like playing rock music, it will inevitably shape you, sometimes without you even realizing it. The sparks of the world system will eventually hit you and make you compliant in some measure with a corrupt culture. Proverbs 6:27-28 asks: "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?" No! This is a good reminder for those listening to CCM. Sooner or later the carnal music will affect us negatively in some ways as we imbibe pagan and worldly music and not encourage us to be more like Christ. Our life is to revolve around our relationship with Christ (Phil. 1:21) and not music.

Small compromises  
lead to greater compromises!



If you move away from the  
WHITE zone you are moving  
toward the DARK zone!

Frank Garlock observes:

"If the music under consideration is found in night clubs, ballrooms, lounges, and other areas where the world congregates to feed the flesh, then the judgment can logically be only one – it is worldly music."

Similarly, rap music is the music of gangs, drug pushers, and criminals. Christians should not identify with this type of music created for the world of darkness. When imbibing rock music in any of its forms we in some measure become worldly in our worship and living and defy God's command to "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" (1 Jn. 2:15-16).

Remember that almost any behavior or practice begins to look and sound normal if we are exposed to enough of it! If we see, do, or hear something long enough, it becomes acceptable and no longer affects our conscience (Tit. 1:15). The once questionable songs can become normal songs to us. Songs on the borderline can take us over the line. This is because we become spiritually insensitive, deadened, and unaware of the sensuality being conveyed in the music.

In the case of rock music, our ears become attuned to the unnatural rhythms to the point that the unnatural becomes natural to us. Participation softens the heart toward error and worldliness (Ps. 1:1). This is why God has called us to separation and not compromise. We need to stop stretching the boundaries and marrying Afro-American pagan rhythms with Christian lyrics.

Compromise takes you further than you want to go. Lot lived on the border of Sodom and eventually he paid a price for it (Gen. 13:12). Interestingly, it has been proven over and over again that even “borderline” rock music can begin to cause teenage rebellion against parents and God. Why is this? It’s because rock music promotes rebellion in both its lyrics and sound.

## TESTIMONY

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. Like Lot, if you can get a taste and glimpse of Sodom (worldliness) with the type of music you have been listening to, then you are opening yourself up for greater spiritual failure and demise.

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."

### How Did Jesus Define Worship?

God wants us to worship Him in His way, not our way. Many Christians have turned worship into a party spirit of entertainment. Their CCM concerts resemble the same as unsaved secular rock concerts with people dancing and carrying on exactly like the unsaved in response to the mind-altering techniques of fleshly rock rhythms. But worshipping God is not a party. Entertaining yourself is not worshipping God.

Today worshipping God in “**spirit and truth**” (Jn. 4:24) is outmoded and replaced with artificial and outward stimulation, emotional manipulation, and individual pleasure-seeking. But Jesus defines the nature of all true worship for us in John 4:24. “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:24).



First, Jesus states that all worship is to be done in the realm of the “**spirit**” (internally and not externally). This means worship is not to be relegated to specific places or buildings (worship centers and Christian Rock concerts!). It means that worship is not based upon outward stimuli such as specific genres of music, the rock idiom,

and the need for a certain atmosphere. Those involved with CCM will often rely on an external addition of rock rhythms to help them allegedly worship.

But true worship does not need any external stimuli to point someone to God. “Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah” (Ps. 4:4). Because of the CCM epidemic we can very easily become strangers to the ability to meditate in silence. It’s a common misconception that music is needed to motivate and induce worship. This certainly is not true. Worship is internal (Jn. 4:24) and it does not require external stimuli of any kind for it to occur (Job. 35:10; Ps.46:10). This means we don’t need specific external sounds and visual stimuli to worship God. It means we don’t need a worship leader to pump up people to create an artificially induced worship or manipulate people into believing they’ve experienced worship.

As we have discussed earlier, the realm of the “**spirit**” also means that our worship is to be spiritual in nature in contrast to that which is soulish or fleshly. Jesus taught that worship always occurs within the realm of our human spirit and spiritual existence where God’s life and the new nature are manifested (John 3:6), and where we express spirituality instead of carnality in our singing and time of worship through the work of the Holy Spirit for we are to “worship God in the spirit” (Phil. 3:3).

This results in “spiritual songs” (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) instead of carefully engineered songs based upon the outward stimulus of rock rhythms which result in bodily gyrations or movements. The fact of the matter is there is no need for worship leaders or rock music to worship God. This is because all true worship always occurs inwardly without any need for external stimuli.

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 unnatural and abused rhythms of rock music 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. In other words, they are simply physical reactions but not spiritual reactions.

Something spiritual would not be stimulated by artificial gimmicks. It is not energized by artificial methods and certain moods. Strong rhythm of any sort will

affect the body in a strong way. We are told in Scripture to be cautious about to what we yield our bodies (Rom. 6:13). What excites the body can potentially dull our spirit. You cannot keep chasing the musical fireworks of rock music and expect to grow in obedience and sanctification.

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.”

Second, Jesus also concludes that all true worship is based upon “**truth**” (revelatory truth from God’s Word). Truth is foundational to every experience (Jn. 8:32). This means worship cannot bypass the mind but must always occur within the realm of revelatory and rational truth about Jesus Christ and His person and work (Jn. 14:6), God’s righteous and holy ways (Ps. 145:17), sanctification (1 Thess. 4:4, 7; 1 Tim. 4:7; 6:11) and reverence (Ps. 89:7) which does not adopt pagan ideas and expressions of worship (Matt. 6:8; 2 Cor. 6:14-17), a type of worship that is based upon God’s unchanging moral nature and absolutes (1 Pet. 1:15-16).

One misconception about worship is that when people have trouble worshipping, Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) will create worship. In other words, Christian rock music will create the atmosphere for worship to occur, and many have called this “the mood for worship.” But true worship is not created through outward stimuli or by experiencing a certain mood. It is not conjured up by a specific atmosphere. The stimulus for all worship is the 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 that relates to God’s greatness, holiness, grace, and mercy revealed in Scripture; it’s the truth about Jesus Christ; it’s the truth about worshipping God reverently and with godly fear because of His impeccable holiness (Ps. 89:7; Isaiah 6:1-3; Heb. 12:28).

Warren Wiersbe defined worship in this way:

“Worship is the believer’s response of all that he is – mind, emotions, will, and body – to all that God is and says and does .... It is a loving response that is balanced by the fear of the Lord, and it a deepening response as the believer comes to know God better.”

Here is the point. To conclude that a certain place or sound is necessary to worship God is contrary to what Jesus taught about worship. Furthermore, to include this same type of manipulative worship and distinct rock sound in our church music is a travesty and mockery of God's truth of Bible separation which commands us to not conform to the standard of the world (Rom. 12:2).

Our music should never reflect Satan's agenda and kingdom of darkness in any way (in lyrics or sounds). Adding Christianized lyrics (words) to the same sounds that Satan has used to promote rebellion against God is still a clear violation of the command for Bible separation which includes separation from all unrighteousness, darkness, Belial's ways, and using our bodies in an unsanctified manner which are to be God's temple or dwelling place where He is to be honored.

We must remember once again that God has called 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. "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thess. 4:7).

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 sanctification (being set apart for God's holy use) and the promotion of God's glory.

For this reason, we should not use our bodies as a vehicle to imbibe rock music. I'm not saying the "flesh" is the same as the body. The bodies God gave us are neutral. However, the flesh can use our bodies and therefore we must be wise and not become a reactionary and mindless victim to rock rhythms.

Furthermore, we must exercise our right to examine everything as the Bereans did, including music, to make sure it meets Biblical standards (Acts 17:11). God has called us to "prove (examine) all things" (1 Thess. 5:21) and therefore "Abstain from all appearance (every form) of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22). This includes the idiom or

specific style of rock music which is part of Satan's kingdom and world of darkness. Separation applies not only to the lyrics of rock music but also the carnal and contemporary sounds that have historically accompanied rock music which inherently promote rebellion against God and His ways.

Christians do not fully grasp or understand who God is in His character of holiness when they listen to CCM music (1 Pet. 1:15-16; Rev. 15:3). This sensually designed musical sound does not represent and reflect His glory or who God is in His eternal being and therefore does not glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31). J. S. Bach wrote in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that "the aim and final reason of all music should be nothing else but the glory of God and the refreshment of the spirit." Our audience is God and we should therefore play and listen to music that glorifies and honors God.

Rock music, whether the secular or the so-called religious form, reflects rebellion against God and His ways and produces in some measure disobedience and rebellion in the lives of Christians who listen to it and promote it. Of course, the Bible reminds us that "this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 Jn. 5:3). And one of God's commands is to separate from musical rebellion and impurity. It should be noted that Christians can "have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:2). The knowledge we receive from God's word keeps our zeal centered upon truth instead of carnal pleasures.

The most compelling and convincing argument against using rock music in all of its forms (lyrics and sounds) is that it mimics Satan's kingdom of musical rebellion and is disorderly which contradicts God's nature for "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Cor. 14:33) and He commands: "let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40). Of course, the worst musical distortion creates the worst confusion. But the principle of order which reflects God's character should be applied to all of our music. God wants *order*, not chaos and confusion (Isa. 41:29). God wants *conformity* to Christ, not conformity to the world (Rom. 12:2; Col. 2:8).

Frank Garlock again states:

"First, contrary to popular opinion, an order in music has existed. It still exists and should be observed in the music of the church and home of the Christian who wants to 'hearken' unto the Lord."

The basic components of Traditional Christian Music has been passed down from century to century which is a type of music accepted by all Christians.

David Fustafson correctly assesses:

“Biblical Fundamentalism’s musical traditions are rooted in both classical music and in the folk music of America, Britain, and Scandinavia – music that strongly influenced our early hymn and gospel songwriters. Churches had their musical roots in stable traditions that were, for all practical purposes, timeless.”

Sacred Christian Music or separated and reverent music is timeless. Why? It’s because man is made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) and God created music to reflect His glory. The Bible teaches in various places that God is the Creator of music (Job 38:7; Ezek. 28:13). This means man was created in the image of God to reflect His likeness and glory through musical expression. It also means the Creator of music has an unchanging order that is to be reflected in all music (1 Cor. 14:40). This means all of our music should reflect the holy character of the Creator who is orderly, holy, and righteous.

1 Corinthians 14:33 again states:

“For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.”

From the time of the early church all the way to the 1960’s, the basic ideas behind Christian music within the Church was largely unchanged. But the Church became musically corrupt with introduction of secularized hippie music into the local churches as the “Jesus Movement” began.

God is the Creator of all good things (Gen. 1:31; Eph. 3:9). But mostly everything God has made, including music, Satan and man has perverted.

Danny Sweatt is correct when stating:

“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.”

The corruption is seen in the disorderly nature of rock music which has been expressed in its backbeats, a sensual beat that has been the centerpiece of sex-

oriented music, excessive syncopation, hypnotic repetition of chords and phrases, unnatural rhythms, extreme loudness, and the overall musical confusion that characterizes disorder and the rebellion of a sinful life against God.

This is 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* once 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."

David Bowie, famed rock musician, is quoted as saying:

"Rock music has always been the devil's music; you can't convince me that it isn't."

Sadly, some Christians are not convinced that rock music in its lyrics and sounds is necessarily the Devil's music. Many more believe that when combining Christian lyrics with rock beats that the musical selection no longer reflects the Devil's music but has magically turned into God's music and is now approved by Him. However, we don't need the musical sound of a degenerate society to mix with Christianity. We are commanded to not follow "the counsel of the ungodly" and this would include their counsel and conclusions regarding musical perversion (Ps. 1:1).

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. 14:40). Disorderly arranged music (rhythmic confusion) does not reflect the order of Creator God.

According to Joshua and Moses, evil can be recognizable and distinguished by a certain musical style reflected in the people's singing. Exodus 32:17-18 records: "And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, *There is a noise of war in the camp. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear.*" In other words, the people's warlike singing was a mark of their debased idolatrous worship. *The sound of their music revealed the spirit of their rebellion before any words were discerned.*

The sound was comparable to "noise" and Joshua and Moses could tell the people were negatively influenced by the music they sang. Think about this. The music

linked to corruption and calf-worship was compared to noise. It evidently was a type of music which was loud, disorderly, repetitious, and full of unnatural accents. The principle of Leviticus 18:23 applies: “It is confusion.” It’s certainly not neutral. And yes, they danced naked to a type of music that was considered “noise.” Music was not neutral then and it certainly is not neutral today. Rock music with its unnatural rhythms creates moral confusion and excites the flesh.

In essence, Joshua said, “Something is wrong in the camp; I can hear it in their singing.” The music apparently communicated discontentment, rebellion, unrest, confusion, defiance, and a lack of reverence for God. This Biblical narrative applies in some ways to CCM singers who copy the world’s standards of music. They are singing music of corruption, a “noise” that is reflective of the sensuality of secular rock music. It is a type of music that is at war with God’s kingdom of righteousness.

In defending the neutrality of sound in CCM, Keith Green 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 erects a classic strawman argument, which is a distorted and exaggerated argument to counter the teaching that says the sound of rock music is evil by design. But Green’s argumentation breaks down because in his reasoning process he is basically saying that rock music can only be wrong if one’s heart is thinking wrong thoughts, but it can be right if one’s heart is reflecting on right thoughts. This argument denies the creative evil purpose of rock music and the doctrine of Biblical separation.

Today each of us as believers in Christ should pray a sincere prayer. “Lord, give me the hearing discernment of Joshua and Moses. Make our ears sensitive to know the difference between godly and ungodly music. Cause us to know the difference between the musical noise of the world which conveys defiance, irreverence, and anti-God philosophy, and the joyful sound of sacred song which is directed unto God, and which truly glorifies Him.”

God says in Amos 5:21, “I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.” In this case, the people had sin in their lives and were running through the rituals without possessing a sincere heart of worship (Heb. 10:22). We are reminded that God is not obligated to always accept our worship. When it comes to CCM, it would seem that God essentially turns up His nose at the worldly rock rhythms that His people are sending up to Him which contradicts the truth of Bible separation from cultural worldliness and which does not reflect His eternal character.

“Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs” (Amos 5:23) is certainly applicable to CCM music. In reality, this form of praise become “noise” to God because of the carnality presented in the music and its defiance against Biblical commands and principles.

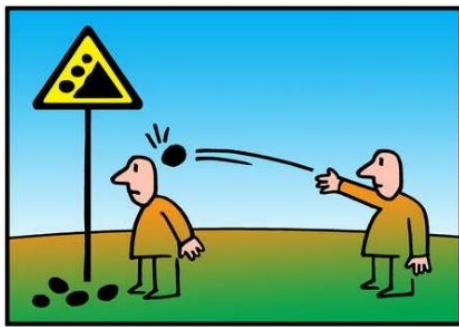
The familiar story of Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego in the furnace provides a good example how music can be used for an evil purpose. Daniel 3:5, 7, and 10 includes several references to music which is identified as “all kinds of musick” (vv. 3, 5). The “sound” mentioned in these verses led the people to worship the golden image. The characteristics of the sound of this music informed them what to do and when to do it. This is another indication that certain musical sounds, sounds of confusion and carnality can be used to promote idolatrous worship and therefore should not be copied by CCM artists to create Christianized versions of secular and sensual rock music.

Once again, Nebuchadnezzar’s music was intended to be used for idolatry, rather than for the praise of God. The musical expression was one of disorder and therefore labeled as “all kinds of musick” (Dan. 3:5, 7) which was apparently a conglomeration of sound brought together to create confusion, and which was conducive to idol worship. Whatever the music sounded like in this day, we know that one can use music (moral or immoral) to create a certain environment purposely designed to move people’s emotions and gain a certain response. This is the powerful influence music can have on people.

It can be observed from Scripture that there is a certain type of music that demons are not comfortable with. “And it came to pass, when the *evil* spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him” (1 Sam 16:23). We need to

dispel the myth that music, including its sound, is amoral (neutral). Music is not amoral (without morality or ethics) in its design and the way it positively or negatively affects people. In fact, the morality of music often manifests itself in the behavior of those listening to it.

Since Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) began to creep into the Church during the era of the 70's, we have seen the expansion, explosion, and exploitation of this type of music (noise) into the 21<sup>st</sup> century in which we live. Some Christians tell me that they only listen to "light Christian Rock."



I often respond with a question: "Have you ever been hit by a light rock?" The Biblical axiom is true: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal. 5:9). A little rock music has a corrupting influence on spiritual music. Although many followers of rock idiom claim that God is blessing this type of musical expression, God will have the final say on the matter (2 Cor. 5:10).

It's been my observation when speaking to other Christians that they not only listen to CCM but crossover and listen to secular rock music as well. This is because of the lack of distinction between secular and CCM music with its worldly and carnally based rhythms and sounds. The leaven of rock music knows no boundaries.

A study was done of teenagers and their music and was released in Psychology Today under the title "It is the Sound that Does it." The researchers reported that 70% of the teens said they judge their songs, whether they like or dislike them, on the basis of the sound rather than by the words. Many, in fact, did not even know the words of favorite songs. This is because sound is a language by itself which can convey spirituality or sensuality.

Evangelist Ken Lynch concluded:

"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.*"

Instead of providing an oasis in the midst of a desert of rock rhythms and sounds, CCM artists continue to lead another generation of young people into the same perverted sound of a rock culture that has not changed its face or original purpose to strategically pollute the lives of people. Nor has it changed its main target which is to introduce Christians to a sound that is reflective of worldliness, and which has a strong potential to lead young people into secular rock music. The path of CCM is normally a steppingstone into the world of secular rock because there is no difference in sound and it's the sound that captivates and captures the hearts of people.



We might add that the flesh doesn't retire just because the lyrics mention Jesus! God has summoned us to live separate, to live different (1 Pet. 4:3-4). He has not given us permission to add frosting (Christian lyrics) to rock rhythms which were created to produce worldly patterns in the lives of people. Instead of tickling our ears with rock music, candy-coating rock music with Christian lyrics, we should remain committed to the Biblical philosophy of musical separation and not pander to the pressure of the progressives on the musical left and "the course of this world" (Eph. 2:2).

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."

It goes without saying that the culture of rock music does not "sweeten" our music but corrupts it because it is a clear identifying mark with Satan's musical agenda. In concluding that rock rhythm somehow sweetens up our music we are actually putting the "bitter for sweet" (Amos 5:20).

Sadly, listening to CCM music creates an appetite and taste 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 (Jam. 1:27; 4:4).

Let's face the facts. Certain music breaks down our spiritual defenses if we allow it into our lives. The sooner Christians understand this the better. Rock music in the form of its lyrics and sound can warp or stunt the sanctification and growth of the Christian.

A seventeen-year-old from Pennsylvania gives this testimony: "'Christian rock' and Christian contemporary music have, in my life, been steppingstones. Not steppingstones 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 an encouraged rebellion, greed, moral impurity, and trying to protect my rights and hide from my parents.

## TESTIMONY

"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!"

Of course, not everyone has the exact same experience as they dabble with the rhythms of rock music. Not everyone is triggered into a cascading or spiraling life of moral failure. However, there is no question about the destructive force that is behind the big beat and the spiritual erosion that can occur in our lives when listening to rock music in all of its forms. The pull is downward – not upward!

The Bible says we are to “seek those things which are above” (Col. 3:1). Out of obedience to God, we are to separate from all carnality, worldliness, and iniquity (2 Tim. 2:19). In fact, God calls us to separate from all forms of rock music on the basis of its devilish, historical evil design, and creative purpose to spiritually contaminate the human race (2 Cor. 6:14-17). We should not use that which was created for immoral purposes and include it in our worship and living. It’s time to take a stand against rock music.

### **Can God Use Anything?**

Can God use anything – even Christian Rock Music? Is God using Contemporary Christian Music for His glory? The Bible teaches that God never approves of His people using anything that is inherently evil to bring about spiritual results (Deut. 32:4; Ps. 145:17). God cannot and does not use anything to further His work of the salvation of souls (Prov. 6:16-19; 8:13; Zech. 8:17; Rev. 2:6, 15).

God hates certain things (Rev. 2:6, 15) and will not use them in His work and for His cause. Many conclude that if good comes out of something (getting people into the church), by using methods that may be questionable (the use of the rock culture), that God can turn this evil around for good and use anything for His glory. However, God has always put a difference between the clean and unclean (Lev. 10:10) or light

and darkness (2 Cor. 6:14; Rom. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:5). Beware of turning the tables upside down!



Can God use anything as contemporary artists claim? Can good come out of something that is inherently evil and wrong? Let us take this argument and run away with

it. 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 a legitimate method to evangelize? 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? Can God use cannibalism as a means of witnessing to the heathen?

If a Christian woman could witness to men and win them 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 the method becomes an acceptable practice that can be legitimately used by God and justify this evil? The CCM argument that God can use anything is ludicrous to say the least. It breaks down on every level – logically, spiritually, and Biblically.

There is a moral/ethical issue connected with rock music. By morality, I mean that in general 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, many Christians will conclude that using the same type of *sound*, when added to Christian words, is not a breach of God's holiness. Of course, 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 (2 Cor. 6:14-17).



The characteristics of worldly rock music must be defined and identified. CCM does not distinguish between moral and immoral musical styles. Rock music includes immoral rhythms, elements, and actions widely accepted in rock music, concerts,

and performances. Some of the key characteristics or elements of rock music and rock musicians can be easily deciphered.

- Repetitive unnatural backbeats and heavy accents on offbeats (the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> beats) created by drums or bass guitars resulting in a drive designed to stir up energy without contemplation.
- Heavy syncopation that does not support the melody.
- Swing Jazz rhythms.
- Excessive and unnatural repetition patterns.
- The musical instability of discord and dissonance (rough, tense, unpleasant chords of unresolved tension).
- Musical distortion instead of musical harmony, rhythms that conflict with the melody.
- Disorderliness and unbalance between melody and rhythm.
- A lack of or total loss of discerning melody (the melody is overwhelmed or non-existent).
- Chaotic frenzied activity.
- Shrieks and hysteria similar to that of pagan people.
- Hypnotic trance effect of abused rhythm which controls a person instead of the Spirit (Gal. 5:25).
- Extreme loudness (over-amplification).
- Heavily amplified bass.
- Sliding, scooping, or singing below pitch.
- Vocal roughness, cracking, scratchiness voice, breathy vocal tone.
- Showbiz singing or imitating secular and worldly performance styles.
- Dancing to backbeats accompanied by sensually suggestive movements such as shimmying the shoulders and swinging or thrusting out the hips.
- Long hair on men (2 Cor. 11:14).

All these specific and identifiable techniques or characteristics that relate to rock music and its presentation portray a message of rebellion against God, sexual stimulus, uncontrolled immorality, confusion, a party spirit, and a lack of musical sense. A heavy beat and high volume amplifies the appeal to the body. Of course, rhythm is designed to keep the music moving, but it is not to dominate the sound and take over the musical piece.

The New Testament gives a repeated emphasis to certain elements that relate to orderly and Biblical music.

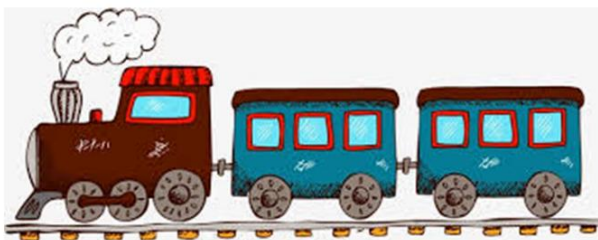
- The Word of Christ indwelling us richly – Col. 3:16
- Teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs – Col. 3:16
- Singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord – Eph. 5:19
- Singing with understanding – 1 Cor. 14:15.
- Orderliness - 1 Cor. 14:40

All these are specific qualities of real music. Rhythm is never to dominate or stand out above these characteristics. Webster defines music as “the art of organizing or arranging sounds into meaningful patterns or forms involving pitch, harmony, and rhythms ... euphony” (agreeable sound). Rock music by design is not created or arranged to follow the normal pattern of musicology but instead abuses rhythms and creates responses in people that are physical, carnal, and not spiritual in nature.

**Melody** in music gives the song its identity. **Harmony** is the support system beneath the melody adding life to the music through chords, instruments, etc. **Rhythm** is the beat of pulse of the music (how the beats are organized and emphasized). It controls the timing, energy, and movement.

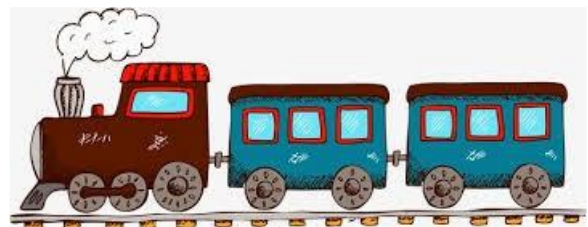
“Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor 14:40). This enduring principle would apply to our music and worship. Titus 1:5 also declares: “that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting” (lacking, forsaken, left behind). Many times music and worship lacks reverence, order, and separation from worldly music and secular methods.

### Order of Sacred Music



**MELODY HARMONY RHYTHM**  
Results in Musical Balance

### Disorder of Christian Rock Music



**RHYTHM HARMONY MELODY**  
Results in Lack or Absence of  
Harmony and Melody

Our bodies are rhythmic in nature. Our hearts beat in rhythm. As a result, we are not a corpse but are kept alive by the normal rhythmic pattern of the heart. In a similar way, all music has rhythm or else it would not be music. But the emphasis of rock music is the intensity and degree to which the rhythm is presented. It presents rhythmic patterns in driving, loud, and repetitive beats, the pounding of unnatural off beats or “abnormal” beats, along with excessive syncopation and deafening bass which are designed to create tension, confusion, and ultimately a fleshly reaction to the music.

Kimberly Smith correctly states this about rock music:

“Its beats are the beats of worldly and pagan musical styles, which were purposely utilized as musical rebellion by men who had low to non-existent morals.”

Later she writes:

“Is it moral (or Christian) to use types of music that have been scientifically proven to have negative effects on listeners? Is it moral to use music that causes people to stumble in their spiritual walk? It is moral to take that which is unholy, such as rhythms from voodoo or trance music, and use them to worship a holy God?”



The question is often asked, “**Where do we draw the line?**” A line must be drawn when we see the worldly/sensual techniques mentioned above introduced into any musical piece. And we must stay as far away from the line as possible. Don’t see how close you can get to it because eventually you will end up crossing the line and accepting flesh-appealing rhythms which can break down your moral compass and bring you into a state of worldliness.

Early CCM (Jesus Music of the 1960’s-1970’s) was patterned after rock music, and this is where it all began. It crept into the churches slowly and then picked up momentum. *Today we find the vast majority of churches are committed to sensual rhythms created during a sexual revolution by depraved people.* If we don’t draw a line in the sand when we hear repetitious offbeats we will eventually allow for more and more rhythmic confusion and continually readjust or move our line. Of course, we might move our line for our own selfish gratification, but God has not moved His line of separation from worldly and carnal music.

God has called us to represent musical morality in the best possible light (Phil. 1:10). This means we should not spoil any Christian song by incorporating small doses of rock rhythms and techniques designed to make music immorally corrupt. “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal. 5:9). God hates a mixture and has always taught that we are to “put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean” (Lev. 10:10) and “Abstain from all appearance (*every form*) of evil” (1 Thess. 5:22). We have enough challenges trying to stay on the right course in life. This means we should not add the negative influence of immoral music (sound and lyrics) into our lives for the simple reason that this world is not a friend of grace to help us live for God.

It is clear that rock music, including its sound, was created for flesh-pleasing or immoral purposes. This is why we should not associate with rock styles or musical rebellion (Eph. 5:11). God wants us to be discerning regarding music: “who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14) which include the moral or immoral elements in music. It’s not difficult to conclude that there is a medium of music created and used for rebellion against God. Since this is true Christians should have no part of it or anything that is after “the rudiments (*the primary or fundamental principles*) of the world” (Col. 2:8, 20).

### **Can Romans 8:28 Be Used to Promote Christian Rock Music?**

Don’t abuse Romans 8:28 (“all things work together for good”) by misinterpreting it. Some contemporary artists will still argue that by changing the words and adding them to the perverted sound of rock music somehow magically turns rock music into something good. Christian lyrics become like pixie dust to change the underlying message of rock music. In other words, it’s asserted that we can use what was once evil and work it together for good. Of course, this is the spiritually bankrupt philosophy which concludes: “Let us do evil, that good may come?” (Rom. 3:8). This is a mindset that misinterprets the Bible and is rooted in fleshly wisdom (2 Cor. 1:12) - not Biblical reasoning.

**Misinterpreting the Bible is as bad as not believing in the Bible. Either way you miss the truth.**

First, we must remember that good does not originate from evil. Good can only be rooted in truth and righteousness (Prov. 2:9, 20; Ps. 52:3).

Second, God cannot bring clean things out of those things which are inherently evil. Job 14:4 asks, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.” God has not changed His viewpoint on this matter.

Third, Romans 8:28 is referring to God doing the good – not a contemporary artist using rock music to bring about good things.

Fourth, not everything is good; it only works together for our good. It only is good if it makes us more like Christ (Rom. 8:29). This is a point missed by the proponents of CCM (Contemporary Christian Music).

Fifth, Romans 8:28 is talking about how a believer’s trials (not rock music or CCM) work together for good to conform them to Christ’s image (Rom. 8:29). It has nothing to do with God using a corrupt form of music that Satan has used and somehow making it palatable to Christianity.

Pagan worship does not conform us to God’s image, nor has God ever accepted pagan worship or reworked it for His glory (1 Cor. 10:20). “And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, *is it* not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, *is it* not evil?” (Mal. 1:8). Sacrifice (worship) must be offered to the Lord on his terms, not ours! Here is the point. Difficult trials or tests should ultimately bring us closer to Christ’s image, but the acceptance and promotion of unrighteous things within our life does not make us more like Christ.

Sixth, Romans 8:28 does not give the Christian a license to do what is wrong in order to achieve good results (Rom. 6:1 – “God forbid”). The Bible warns us to never use a passage of Scripture, like Romans 8:28, to promote and fulfill our own selfish agenda. When we do this, we “corrupt the word of God” (2 Cor. 2:17) and are charged with huckstering the Bible or “handling the word of God deceitfully” (2 Cor. 4:2).

Someone wrote:

“Before God can deliver us we must undeceive ourselves.”

This can only be done when we handle the Word of God sincerely, open up our hearts to truth, fully surrender, and place ourselves under God’s complete authority (Rom. 12:1-2; Jam. 4:7).

## Is it Right to Do Wrong in Order to Do Right?

Bob Jones once said:

“It’s never right to do wrong in order to do right.”



While attempting to do wrong (using rock music) in order to do right (worship or evangelize others), you tempt God (Matt. 4:7) and become unfruitful in your living and practice (2 Pet. 1:8-9). Once again, Romans 8:28 has nothing to do with using the techniques of rock music so God can miraculously turn them around for good. God does not bring good out of the “unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph. 5:11) or the rebellious sound that mimics the world system and old way of life (1 Pet. 1:14). Can we honestly conclude that sensual music techniques are a “fruitful” work? Good comes out of good, bad comes out of bad, and never shall the two meet. Since this axiom is true, we must always do right! Don’t get into the habit of asking, “Is it right for me?” Ask yourself, “Is it right?”

Deuteronomy 6:18 echoes this unchanging principle:

“And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord: that it may be well with thee ...”

Wendell Heller once said:

“We are to do right because it is right.”

As previously stated, God does not compromise on any issue, and neither should we. We should always be honest, fair, consistent, and live with integrity before God (Eph. 6:14). Therefore, we must do right and not seek to use a worldly medium to worship or win souls.

Remember:

“There is never a right way to do a wrong thing.”

Likewise:

“It’s never right to do a good thing in a wrong way.”

Lastly:

“There is only one way to be right and many ways to be wrong.”

The right thing to do is to always do the right thing. It is not enough to do what is right (worship and evangelism); we must also do it in the right way! We are called upon to “strive lawfully” (2 Tim. 2:5) which means to follow God’s rules for righteousness, holiness, and godliness in everything that we do. We are not to play by our own set of rules, but by God’s rules. A song may be directed to God in worship but at the same time the worship must be acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1-2).

The idea that is being promoted today is this: “No one is perfect, God still loves us; therefore, it should not matter how a person worships or what kind of music he listens to in his Christian life.” This is a warped way of thinking. 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 relates to our obedience to Him and practicing what is right (John 14:15; 1 John 5:2).

You cannot reconcile right with wrong. We are commanded to choose the good and refuse to do the evil. Psalm 34:14 commands us to “Depart from evil, and do good...” Psalm 37:27 adds, “Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.”

R. B. Ouellette once remarked:

“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.”

Good advice!

### **Being Free or Bound?**

The Bible teaches that at one point in the history of God’s people “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 17:6; 21:25). Sadly, the majority of Christians have decided for themselves what they want to believe and embrace about music apart from God’s word. It seems that the Church today has fallen into this trap or snare. However, this mindset within the ranks of the Church today promotes *relativism* (truth is flexible, a person creates their own truth), *antinomianism* (no law – no clear commandments) and *libertinism* (radical freedom that promotes sin).

Libertinism is a false freedom and wildfire that the Bible never endorses. Christians can deceptively conclude that they feel “free” while listening to CCM by letting

down the reigns and basing their musical worship and experience on emotionalism, a physical response, and carnality instead of truth. This is using liberty “for an occasion to the flesh” (Gal. 5:13) and “a cloke of maliciousness” (1 Pet. 2:16) as you seek to cover up that which is evil or wicked.



The truth of the matter is that many who claim to be listening to rock music on the basis of their freedom in Christ are actually bound to disobedience and worldliness because of their failure to separate from rock music in all of its forms. They are also controlled and bound to the lyrics, big beat, synthesizers, heavy bass, and the overall disorder presented in rock music.

Sadly, they are also *emotionally bound* or addicted to this type of music. They listen to CCM and secular rock music to generate certain feelings and highs (like drugs) to escape the real world. Christians listen to rock music to escape reality, guilt, and sin, but also to experience soulish artificial highs that do not minister to the spiritual part of man’s existence. They are bound to the backbeats or offbeat accents (the pounding of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> beats) that are part of all rock music and which the old nature responds to – not our regenerate nature. Instead of finding fulfillment in their walk and relationship with Christ (Phil. 1:21; 3:10; Gal. 2:20) they look for an artificial and empty escape through rock music.

Yes, it’s true. Most Contemporary Christian Music 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).

Ernest Pickering comments on emotions and rock music:

“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 (advocates) 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.’”

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).

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. We must discipline our lives to only listen to godly music (1 Cor. 9:27). Our emotional response to music can be misinterpreted as something spiritual when in reality it is only physical and soulish (fleshly in nature).

Beware of this! You can worship your feelings, music, and the general physical response you get from rock music instead of worshipping God. In short, you can worship your style of worship instead of worshipping God. We should be very careful not to justify or sanctify a type of worship which may in various ways reflect Satan’s kingdom of darkness, carnality, worldliness, showmanship (entertainment) and which becomes a diversion from the true type of worship that God requires (John 4:24).

Here is the point. God has called us to live according to true liberty, no longer being emotional, physical, carnal slaves or “the servants of sin” (Rom. 6:20) but instead the “servants of righteousness” (Rom. 6:18). Yes, we are free (“free indeed” – John 8:36), which means we can experience freedom when living separated and liberated from the sinful lifestyles of our past (Eph. 2:1-2; 1 Pet. 4:4; 1 Cor. 6:11). Therefore, the real emphasis on liberty is not the freedom to live, as we once lived, but to live a new way of life that is liberated from the old way of life (2 Cor. 5:17). Our choice now becomes God’s choice, and we live under His authority as the “Lord’s freeman” (1 Cor. 7:22), while remaining liberated from the bondage of sin and the old way of life.

Many Christian young people and 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. Some are under bondage and don't realize it. The Bible teaches: "I will not be brought under the power (*authority, enslavement*) of any" (1 Cor. 6:12). This means that we should never become enslaved to anything in life except our Master Jesus Christ (Matt. 6:24) who frees us from spiritual bondage.

Rock music, even Christian Rock Music, can create a stronghold in your life. An alcoholic may deny he's an alcoholic. In the same way those who listen to rock music (religious or secular) can deny they are in bondage to their music. However, when they take a musical fast and stop listening to it for an extended period of time, it becomes evident that the music is a dominant force in their life. By the way, the only way alcoholics are helped is by total abstinence!

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.

## TESTIMONY

"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."

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 it was 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."

Here is 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!!"

Here is 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!”

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 hall 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.”

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 (this goes back a few years!) 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 (Rev. 12:11).

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. I believe that kind of music is driving people from Christ.” In other words, it’s “not after Christ” (Col. 2:8). There are many things that are “devilish” and rock music is one of them.

Yes, there is a relationship between demons and certain drum rhythms that is very real and should be a valid concern for Christians. At the same time, I’m not saying

that all CCM is Satanic music and that it is used to worship Satan. But don't fool yourself and let your emotions get in the way. Don't let down your guard. You must realize that Satan can sometimes in subtle ways (Eph. 6:11) use CCM to start you on a downward path that will take you further than you ever intended to go with your musical choices, ethics, and overall lifestyle of purity. Remember that Satan appears as an angel (messenger) of light (2 Cor. 11:14). We need to be careful we don't follow his shenanigans or deceitful workings. Remember that if you give Satan an inch, he will try and take a yard.

## Gradualism

We must all be careful of gradualism, gradually weakening our stance and former position and slipping away from the correct separated position.

We can drift from a former position and lose truth and even the sanctification we once embraced (Jer. 2:2-5; 14:10-11; Ezek. 6:9). Few Christians finish with the convictions that they started with because of gradual erosion!

Gradualism happens as we slowly become comfortable with compromise. Gradualism occurs when we fail to hate evil and love the good (Ps. 97:10; 119:104, 128; Prov. 8:13; Rom. 12:9), when we view pragmatic results above obedience (1 Sam. 15:22-23; 2 Tim. 3:14), when we lose our will to discern (Heb. 5:14), when we associate with wrong people and fellowships (1 Cor. 15:33), when we fail to see how little things corrupt our lives (1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9; Song 2:15), when ministries become obsessed with bigness, theatrics, and success (Luke 12:32; Zechariah 4:10), when we lose sight of the holiness of God (Lev. 11:45; 2 Pet. 3:11), and when men are not leading the home (Josh. 24:15). Which reminds me, "As the men go, so goes the church!"

David Cloud said:

"One of the greatest problems among Bible-believing churches today is the phenomenon of gradualism. Worldliness and ecumenical philosophies and charismatic music and many other injurious things are gradually making inroads into fundamentalist churches. This makes the problem difficult to detect and even more difficult to correct."

Christians who are in the contemporary movement often say, "This feels right to me and is good for me" when referring to their form of worship and acceptance of



rock music. As previously mentioned, this is the philosophy of *relativism* which concludes that truth or what is right and wrong can be flexible, much like a rubber band, and that everyone can create and condone their own belief systems. Of course, living as we please without any Biblical checks and balances is disguising (masquerading) and perverting the

message of true Christian liberty (Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet. 2:16). Remember that what feels right to you might not be based upon the truth of Bible separation.

"Feelings come and feelings go,  
And feelings are deceiving;  
My warrant is the Word of God  
– Naught else is worth believing."

This quote from Martin Luther emphasizes the importance of trusting in the promises and power of God's Word to change us rather than relying on fluctuating emotions and feelings.

### **Sanctifying Grace or Grace Gone Wild?**

Christians conclude that grace means freedom. Yes, grace does mean freedom, liberty to live free from sin and disobedience! The unchanging message of grace portrays God hating sin by penalizing Christ in our place "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). However, this same display of amazing grace teaches us to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts" and "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:12). The message of grace does not make us liberal; grace liberates us from sin. The message of the cross and grace is clear: "God hates sin and so should we." Grace motivates us to hate sin, as God hated sin, when He allowed His Son Jesus Christ to die the sinner's death. Christ's gracious death on the cross teaches us to despise sin as God does and live differently.

Many claim that grace means freedom, and freedom means we can now listen, follow, and promote CCM. But this is grace gone wild! It is grace gone amuck! Grace sanctifies us; it does not make us sinful (Rom. 6:1-15). Grace teaches us to deny ungodly music. If



your conclusion about grace is to give you the freedom to listen to various forms of rock music, then you have misunderstood and distorted the true message behind grace. Grace introduces us to experience a newfound freedom to live above the world's standards and ungodliness. It liberates us by teaching us to follow the path of separation (holiness) and live separate from heathen ways. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you" (2 Cor. 6:17).

Ernest Pickering again comments:

"The New Testament is not all about what we can do, but it is also about what we cannot do."

The instruction and discipline of grace does not grant us a free-for-all lifestyle. It does not promote a "live and let live" philosophy. Living under grace (Rom. 6:14), as a new way of life, results in believers practicing holiness (1 Pet. 1:14-16; 2 Cor. 7:1), separating from and not supporting apostasy or unrighteousness in any form (2 Cor. 6:14-17); respecting their bodies as the dwelling place of God (1 Cor. 6:19-20), repudiating fleshly lusts that war against the soul (1 Pet. 2:11), refusing to conform to the world's unrighteous standard (Rom. 12:2), not fellowshiping with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11), proving (examining) all things (1 Thess. 5:21), and then abstaining from every form of evil (1 Thess. 5:22).

This means that God's grace is not a license to please our flesh. It's a newfound freedom to live as God wants us to live, a life that does not reflect the old way of living. The label of legalism often arises at this point. The loophole of legalism is used to approve of people listening to CCM and rock music. If we seek to give Biblical directives for music and worship, we are labeled a legalist creating rules for everyone else to live by. Of course, the Bible's commands and enduring principles is to be our guide and authority over all worldly actions and unsanctified living by providing us with "instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). There is no such thing as radical individualism taught in the New Testament but humble instruction that gives guidance to others to walk in sanctification (2 Tim. 2:2).

The problem in the Church today is that nobody wants any rebuke or correction (1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 4:2; Rev. 3:19) and when they are challenged to change their conduct, they default to the word legalism. By the way, is it legalistic to look at sensual pornographic material on the internet? Is it legalistic when we make rules

that the ladies cannot wear bikinis when they are singing in the church choir? Is it legalistic to disciple a young convert and tell him to rid his life of occult practices and drug addiction?

You say, "That's silly." Yes, it is, but it's just as silly to conclude that exposing sensual and immoral music is legalistic. Stop playing the legalistic card. It's never legalistic to avoid sin! Beware of abusing true liberty and turning it into a license to sin and get your own carnal way - "only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh" (Gal. 5:13). We can use the "legalistic excuse" for anything that we want to continue to participate with.

It's also easier to excuse our behavior when participating in CCM concerts and such like because everyone seems to be doing it. But sometimes there can be rampant disobedience and corporate sinning among God's people. God often calls His people to corporately humble themselves, and pray, and seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways (2 Chron. 7:14).

You might say, "All my friends are listening to CCM. Most churches are playing it." However, the fact that many are approving rock music does not mean it is approved by God. In fact, God warned, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Ex. 23:2). Remember that the majority has always been wrong in spiritual matters. The majority was wrong in Jesus' day ("fear not little flock"). 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! 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). And finally, God has not called us to be popular and get along with everybody. Christians will often say, "Everyone's using CCM; everyone's offering casual worship services." But many times "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Lk. 16:15).

Others might say that their motive is right in listening to CCM. Maybe so, *but a good motive does not make a bad action right*. Believing our motives are right when we are being disobedient to God's Word does not make our motives pure. Obedience is more important to God than our motive and worship (1 Sam. 15:22-23). The

present generation of Christians are being taught that even if one is disobedient, God still loves him or her and so it really does not matter.

Of course, this is a disastrous idea “For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry” (1 Sam. 15:23). What does witchcraft have to do with Christians? The link between the two is that Christians are being tempted by demonic influences which lure them away into idolatrous types of living, including musical rebellion against God (1 Cor. 10;20). We should always seek to protect ourselves from counterfeit music which resembles the world and appeals to the flesh (Eph. 6:11-17).

Jerry Bridges wrote:

“Only those who are obedient can – who are pursuing holiness as a way of life – will know the joy that comes from God.”

Obedience to God in daily living and holiness is more important than worship because disobedience can turn worship into a fleshly ritual without genuine spirituality (1 Sam. 15:22). Furthermore, when we are disobedient to what God’s Word says concerning worship it reflects rebellion. Like Cain, you can choose to worship in your own way instead of being obedient to God’s way or pattern of worship (Gen. 4:3).

Of course, many Christians might say, “I’m sincere in my CCM form of worship.” However, Christians can *be sincerely wrong in what they are doing and promoting* when it does not align with the Scriptures. Sincerity must always be rooted in truth and righteousness (Phil. 1:10; 1 Pet. 2:2).

Paul was not a legalist, and he realized the importance of structure and discipline when writing: “But I keep under my body (*I take the rough road and discipline my body*), and bring it into subjection” (1 Cor. 9:27) by placing it under God’s rule.

Winston Churchill once said:

“I spent the first twenty-five years of my life wanting more freedom, and the next twenty-five years of my life wanting more structure, and the last twenty-five years of my life realizing that structure is freedom.”

## Does God Only Look at the Heart?

1 Samuel 16:7 says:

“But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”



Yes, God knows our hearts better than we do! And our hearts can deceive us (Jer. 17:9). Of course, this is a reference to Saul’s physical attributes and stature – not to music or clothing. But many will use this truism as an excuse to listen to CCM and dress down and drabby (an even immodestly) for church because God allegedly only looks at the heart. It’s true that God looks at the heart. But it is to be a heart pursuing purity, reverence, and obedience! Furthermore, God also looks at the body which is to be used in “sanctification and honour” (1 Thess. 4:4) because what we are doing with our body reveals the condition of our heart.

Nevertheless, a large number of Christians who imbibe the rock idiom, a style of musical rebellion, noise, and confusion, have used this verse as a proof text for using rock music in their personal worship and as a medium to win the lost. Somehow, if a person has a genuine desire to win souls, if they have good intentions in what they are doing, if their heart is right, then anything goes. They can use rock music and other worldly allurements or gimmicks to see people saved.

Many Christians conclude that the type of music they listen to and worship with does not matter to God as long as their heart is right. Of course, this is like saying it’s okay to mix rat poison with your apple sauce, if you have convinced yourself that you are trying to build up a resistance to rat poison!



If God only looks at the heart, then why does He reveal later in 1 Samuel 15:23 that “rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry?” Any truism can be distorted and taken out of context. The point is this. God is looking for a pure heart and one that is free from iniquity and hypocrisy!

The outward physical stature does not matter in relationship to a person's inward purity and personal relationship with God. However, sin does matter before God, and sin begins in the heart! In fact, what we do with our bodies (our ears, eyes, hands, feet, physical organs) also matters with God (1 Cor. 6:19; 1 Thess. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:21) and is a symptom of the heart. This means what we listen to does matter to God! What we listen to is a diagnosis of the heart.



“Oh be careful little ears, What you hear,  
Oh be careful little ears, What you hear.  
For the Father up above, Is looking down in love,  
So be careful little ears, What you hear.”

Once again, we must remember that the heart can be deceitful (Jer. 17:9) and become defiled (Ps. 51:10). We can err in our hearts (Heb. 3:10). Therefore, truth should be our focus and not the whimsical feelings and fleshly wants of our heart (John 17:17).

Truth should confirm the heart – the heart should not confirm truth. Granted, your heart may be sincere in what you are doing, even when your actions might be wrong. The old saying is still true; “We can be sincere, but sincerely wrong.” I believe this is the case with many contemporary Christian Rock artists who are attempting to use rock music to win precious souls to Christ. They might be sincere in evangelizing the unsaved, but their whole concept of evangelizing the lost through rock music is unbiblical.

CCM artists seem to forget that the Bible never once says that music was used as a medium to win the unsaved but was only used as a teaching and sanctifying ministry for God's saints (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). David declared that as a result of his new song and praise “Many will see *it* and fear, and will trust in the LORD” (Ps. 40:3). Of course, David was not talking about the salvation of Gentiles but that God's saints living under the Old Covenant would be encouraged to walk by faith in God as a result of seeing or witnessing David's own joyful experience of deliverance from his woeful and bleak predicament.

This is not to say that God cannot use the Scriptural words of a song to convict an unbeliever in his sin and point him to Christ (Rom. 10:17), but this was not the sole

purpose of music. I remember an unsaved man listening to a choir singing the words “Isn’t it Grand to be a Christian” and those words made him reflect on his life and eventually led him to ask how he can experience this kind of life. Of course, the Gospel was shared with him and he was then saved.

### **Are You a Conformer or Transformer?**

Romans 12:2 commands:

“And be not conformed (*molded*) to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind (*the renovation of your thinking*), that ye may prove (*discern*) what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

This verse reminds us that God wants us to be a transformer – not a conformer to the world’s standard of music or the type of music that reflects a rock culture and Satan’s world of darkness. God wants us to live differently and separately from the musical rebellion of the unsaved. This is true in relation to both the lyrics and sounds of rock music. God wants us to conform to His holy standard of musical order in our worship and evangelistic outreach.



Tim Fisher states:

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

The rebellious music of the world system (1 Jn. 2:15-16) should not be promoted and used to win the rebellious or unsaved within our society. This is like using drugs to win those who are controlled by drugs or using alcohol to win those who are living under the influence of alcohol. It’s an absurdity. Worldly music does not spawn repentance and faith in the hearts of the unsaved – only God (Rom. 2:4) and God’s Word (Rom. 10:17) can produce repentance and faith in the hearts of the lost.

When it comes to evangelism, we must remember that God is not only concerned about reaching people; He’s also concerned with how we reach people. God is not only interested in results; He is interested in how we achieve the results. The *command* for evangelism (Mk. 16:15) is just as important as the *way* of evangelism (1 Pet. 3:15). We are instructed to be holy in “all manner of conversation” or living

(1 Pet. 1:15). This includes evangelism. We are to imitate God's holiness – "Be ye holy; for I am holy." Christians sometimes say, "I don't want to play and promote music that is strange to my unbelieving friends." But Peter tells us that our lives will become increasingly "strange" to the unsaved world for "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*" (1 Pet. 4:4).

God has called us to imitate Him and His ways ("Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children" - Eph. 5:1). This applies to our outreach and ministry toward the unsaved. We are to be imitators of God and not imitators of the unsaved world. God has never invited us to be charmed by the world's delights as we endeavor to reach the masses. We are never to conform to the world's standard in evangelizing the lost and teaching discipleship to new converts. To state it succinctly, we should never allow the world to squeeze us into its mold (Rom. 12:2). Once again, God wants us to be a transformer – not a conformer.



We get our word metamorphosis from the Greek word translated "transformed" (Rom. 12:2). This means God wants us to be a beautiful butterfly, portraying a new way of life and freedom in Christ, and no longer resemble the old caterpillar (larva) way of living, crawling through life bound to the world of sin.

Someone wrote:

"Identification with the world and its needs is one thing, imitation of the world and its foolishness is quite another."

We are to be *fishers* of men (Matt. 4:19) but not *compromisers* with men (1 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 7:26). Although we can be *innovative* while witnessing to the lost (1 Cor. 9:22), God has never said we are to become *worldly* (Titus 2:12) while casting out the Gospel net. We are to be salt and light in our message, music, and manner of living (Matt. 5:13-14).

If we are going to curse the darkness, then we must light a candle! The unsaved should see a difference in our lives since we are a "new creature" or creation in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). The music of fallen men is deformed and tainted with sin. Christians should have no part with the twisted values presented in rock rhythms and the



world of religious entertainment that does not glorify God. When the unsaved see Christians imitate everything that they do, they will see no reason to change their lives and live for God's glory. They won't perceive us as being different. But God has called us to be different in a godly way (1 Pet. 4:4). Our desire should reflect the old children's song: "This little light of mine, I'm going to leave it shine!"

This means the Church's purpose is not to please the world of lost humanity but Christ (Jn. 8:29; Gal. 1:10; 2 Tim. 2:4). It also means we need to stop making deals with sinners! In other words, we need to stop playing worldly and sensual music thinking it will win them to Christ. As previously mentioned, music is always referred to as a way to praise God and instruct believers (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), it's never intended to be a specific vehicle or medium to win the lost (1 Cor. 2:1-2; Acts 8:4).

Of course, this does not mean the Gospel truth presented in music cannot be convicting and convince one of his need for salvation through the cross. Ultimately, the message and sound behind our music should create conviction in the heart and ear of the unsaved listener, not comfort. Our Biblical standards of musical separation should be consistent with the offense of the cross (Gal. 5:11) – not with the pleasure-seeking of man. We need to stop making music "user-friendly" to the enemies of Christ and the cross!

I recall listening to a highly successful, secular, rock artist talking about some Christian Rock band that he heard playing. His words were very interesting and straight to the point as he remarked about the CCM band. He commented, "I'm not impressed at all with their cheap imitation of rock music." Truth be told, the lost unsaved masses are not saved because of a worldly brand of Christianity which reflects their lifestyle in almost every conceivable way. We must remember that it's *difference* (a new way of life) that impacts or attracts the unsaved to Christ and Christianity - not a *similarity* or imitation of the unsaved lifestyle such as grotesque body piercings, rock music, tattoos, long hair on men, immodest dress, etc.

The unsaved are looking for abundant life (John 10:10) - not the same kind of life. If they see no difference between Christians and non-Christians, or if the distinction is blurred between light and darkness, between righteousness or unrighteousness, this results in the liberating message of the Gospel being lost which declares that Jesus came to save people "from their sins" (Matt. 1:21) - not so they might remain in their same sins.

William King remarked that “everyone is not comfortable with God. But the contemporary music is a way of making them comfortable.” However, the Gospel of the Bible is not designed to make people feel comfortable and good but to convict them of their sins and need for repentance and faith in Christ (Acts 2:37). More damage than good has been done to the cause of Christ since the intervention of the rock idiom in church life and evangelism.

Dr. Vance Havner said it best when he made this conclusion about imitating the lost to win them to Christ: “The idea that we must imitate the world in clothes, language, and music to make the gospel attractive is not divine but demonic. To begin with, the gospel was never meant for entertainment. The sin against the Holy Spirit lay in ascribing the work of God to the devil. Is it not equally possible to ascribe the work of the devil to God? I do not believe that the spiritually sensitive soul can equate gospel jazz and hippie hootenannies with the hallelujahs of the redeemed.”

This reminds us that God wants us to possess reverence and godly fear in our musical choices and worship. The Lord is looking for *worshipful surrender* to His holy purpose in musical expression (Rom. 12:1-2).

### **Reverence or Reflecting the World?**

The Bible reveals that our worship is to be holy and reverent – not hellish and reflective of the world system (1 Jn. 2:15) that is against God’s way and truth. The Biblical words of “fear” and “reverence” are joined together in Scripture and teach we are to possess a profound sense of respect for God and His holy character in our time of worship.

Psalm 96:9 declares:

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

Psalm 89:7

“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.”

Hebrews 12:28 also 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.”

## 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 the Lord. In this context, reverence speaks of possessing a daily awareness of God’s holy character and righteous 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. 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, but I am also afraid of doing anything that would displease Him and negatively affect 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 because it is 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).

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.”

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 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. God keeps asking a question to those who keep writing, singing, and listening to CCM: “wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?” (Acts 13:10).

Of course, the Sacred Music followers who adhere to a Biblically based worship which involves separation from worldliness are sometimes charged with a selfish refusal to adjust to the changing culture. They have even been called the Pharisees of the 21st-century Church who are guilty of obstructing a great forward-

movement of God's people and forcing division over non-essentials. But the clear revelation of God's Word against adopting worldly culture into Christianity (Jam. 4:4; Rom.12:2; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; Rev. 2:20) and upholding or vindicating the pristine character of God's holiness (Lev. 11:44) is not Pharisaical or non-essential. God has called us to *counteract* a worldly culture – not *interact* with it. Today the sense of a holy God has been replaced with glamour and nerve-jarring music that could never be acceptable in the presence of a holy God (Isaiah 6:1-7).

Reverencing and fearing God (Eccl. 12:13; Heb. 12:28), showing deep respect and reverence for God's impeccable character of holiness, the willingness to submit to His righteous ways as revealed in Scripture, 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 (Mal. 3:6), our music should not change. It should remain sacred and not become sacrilegious. If we are honest, we must admit there is no real "fear of God" imparted through the vehicle of rock music.

When we fear God with a deep and profound reverence for His eternal being and character, when we want to please our God whom we greatly respect, then we will learn not to mix light with darkness, good with the bad, bitter with sweet, and the rhythms of worldly music with Christian lyrics.

John Coblenz wrote:

"If, therefore, we are to know the right music from the wrong, we must know God. Music which is in accord with his character is right music. Music which is out of character with God is wrong music."

### **Are You Strange?**

1 Peter 4:4 declares:

"Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you."

Are you strange? I don't mean strange in that you are wearing a watermelon on your head! But strange in the sense that your life has been drastically changed and you



are now a follower of Jesus Christ. When we live a righteous life, the unsaved will think that we are “strange” since we refuse to live according to their own brand of lifestyle. They won’t think we are “progressive” and “secular” like them, but strange. The unsaved crowd should see a marked contrast and difference in our lives, including our music, if we are truly living for Christ and His glory. We must seek to maintain our salt and light distinction/testimony (Matt. 5:13-14) if we are going to effectively share the transforming message of the Gospel.

Salt preserves the truth and light reveals the truth. Whenever we promote worldly things in our personal lives, churches, and evangelistic outreach ministries, we become less salty and radiate less light before an unsaved and watching world. When we adopt the world’s standards, our light begins to flicker, and we lose our testimony and effectiveness in winning the lost. Once again, we are called upon to be the “light of the world” (Matt. 5:14) instead of living in the dark shadows of worldliness. God wants us to act like “children of the day” (1 Thess. 5:5) instead of children of the devil (John 8:44). He wants us to “walk in the light” (1 John 1:7) instead of the night.

“How beautiful to walk in the steps of the Savior,  
Stepping in the light, stepping in the light,  
How beautiful to walk in the steps of the Savior,  
Led in paths of light.”

### **Friend or Follower of Sinners?**

Jesus did not “go along to get along.” Jesus was a *friend* of sinners (Luke 7:34) but He did not *follow* the path of sinners. He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb. 7:26). This means that He did not participate with their sins or associate with their sinful lifestyle in any way.



The same should be true of Christians today in their outreach ministry to the lost. Jesus *witnessed* to the sinner without becoming *worldly* like the sinner (Jn. 8:11). Jesus *cared* for people without *compromising* with the people. We are called to be like Christ and live undefiled from the ways of sinners. As we *witness* to the lost, we should never *walk* like the

lost or “walk as men” (1 Cor. 3:3). This means we can effectively see souls saved without compromising with the culture of our age. This is because it’s the Gospel that saves souls (Rom. 1:16) – not the repetitive rock beats and carnal entertainment of a Christian Rock concert.

We can evangelize Christ’s way instead of a carnal (fleshly) way. I cannot imagine Jesus being part of a CCM rock band and playing the perverted sounds that stem from a cultural revolution of sex, drugs, rebellion against God, and Satan’s kingdom of darkness. What is your sole desire in life? It should be to become more like Jesus in your worshiping, thinking, living, and evangelizing.

“I have one deep, supreme desire,  
That I may be like Jesus.  
To this I fervently aspire,  
That I may be like Jesus.

I want my heart His throne to be,  
So that a watching world may see  
His likeness shining forth in me.  
I want to be like Jesus.”

### **Have You Lost Your Spiritual Taste Buds?**

The Bible should be the determining factor of what we like in music and worship – not our personal preferences, tastes, ideas, and wants. This is because we can develop tastes for both good and evil. There may be times when our tastes need to be restructured. A Biblical philosophy of music includes separation from worldly and sensual music in both sound and lyrics (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

Doug Bachorik states:

“Music, as with anything in our lives, is like a ship whose anchor should be lodged on the rock of the Scriptures, not left to be tossed upon the shifting waves of this world.”

I don’t *prefer* TSM (Traditional Sacred Music) over CCM (Contemporary Christian Music). Instead, I follow TSM because God has called me to a life of sanctification and separation in all areas of living. We need to be musically *fundamental by Biblical*

*conviction* based upon the Biblical teaching of Bible separation - not by personal preferences and tastes. This is because our moral tastebuds might be off.



The word “sacred” means that which pertains to God. This means Sacred Music is music in both words and sound that is different from all other kinds of music, both secular and CCM.

This is because it is consecrated to God through the application of Biblical commands and principles related to Bible separation and reverence (2 Cor. 6:17; Heb. 12:28). Sacred and separated music are one and the same.

Frank Garlock states:

“All aspects of sacred music - the character of the sound, the implication of the words, the manner in which the words and sound are delivered, and the spirit projected - all of these should draw the listener from the world and direct his attention to the Lord.”

We need to have a strong apologetic to defend Biblical music versus non-Biblical music and this can only come from the clearly stated Bible commands and principles that relate to separation, God’s glory, and obedience. CCM is a theologically bankrupt type of music. It does not align with Scripture. **CCM music should be relabeled as “Counterfeit Christian Music.”** This is exactly what it is when tested by Scripture. It is a type of pseudo-Christian music which Satan uses to bring us into a place of compromise with the world, creating spiritual confusion in our thinking, resulting in fleshly or carnal responses, and possibly developing a harvest of wickedness in our lives.

Isaiah 5:20 declares:

“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!”

This is what occurs in the life of many Christians when they imbibe the lyrics and sounds of rock music. In some measure, what is evil (rock music) they label as good and choose a form of darkness (rock music) over the light of God’s absolute standard and truth. This process can also be understood as losing one’s spiritual taste buds. In other words, we can eventually lose our taste for righteousness and God’s purity in the realm of music and worship, when we continually imbibe contemporary music and a type of worship that reflects the world.

Danny Sweatt writes:

“Making judgments by personal preference assumes that one’s tastes are scripturally sound, mature, educated, and well balanced. Even the finest Christian has a fleshly nature and is prone to appetites and inclinations that are not spiritual. There are things that seem very appealing but are far from appropriate for the Christian.”

There must be a better criteria than “I like CCM!” The only criteria must be “what saith the scripture?” (Rom. 4:3). This is because without Scripture we can lose sight of God’s creative order of things including musical expression (1 Cor. 14:40). We can actually train ourselves to compromise with the world’s standard by throwing a little lyrical morality into our fleshly rock rhythms.

As a result, Christians become accustomed to the musical techniques being used, which are borrowed straight from secular rock, and they become desensitize and numb in their spiritual senses and response to what is fleshly and worldly. Instead of making *objective* choices based upon truth we follow *subjective* feelings based upon morally debunked rhythms.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 reveals that during the last days “men shall be lovers of their own selves” and “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof ...” I would contend that this is true to a certain extent within the CCM Movement. Often the reason musical styles are accepted or rejected is based on the pleasure of the worshipper, not God.



People will say to me, “CCM is my personal preference or style, or what I like and choose to listen to for worship.” However, the exercise of my personal preference, style, or taste (what I like) can only be valid within the parameters of God’s Word (Jn. 17:17) which gives direct commands and enduring principles of righteousness and spiritual order related to music

and worship. We cannot define how God wants to be worshipped according to our likes but according to His unchanging standard of truth. We often try and conform God to our standards instead of conforming to His (Rom. 12:2). In the final analysis it’s not what I like but what God likes that counts.

You can also be persuaded about something but your personal belief about any issue doesn’t necessarily make your belief Biblical. Likewise, when we say our

choices are a matter of personal taste or preference, we are placing our opinions above the authority of God's Word (2 Cor. 6:14-17). You might also say "The Holy Spirit led me into CCM" but the Holy Spirit only leads us in the way of sanctification (Eph. 5:18) and correct Biblical instruction and doctrine (Jn. 16:13). The Spirit never leads us to participate in behavior contrary to the holiness and purity of God's character.

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 a rebellious musical spirit, but the Holy Spirit of godly and spiritual music (Eph. 5:18).

Sadly, if we begin to accept rock rhythms and other aspects of rock music in our churches and worship we begin in some measure to adopt a worldly theology and belief system based upon historical and present-day musical rebellion and therefore depart from "the doctrine which is according to godliness" (1 Tim. 6:3). This refers to teaching based on Scripture that encourages and promotes godly behavior. The correspondence between truth and godliness, between error and moral/ethical deficiency, is a reoccurring theme in Scripture (Titus 2:11-12; 1 Tim. 4:1-5).

Here is the good news. Once we move inside the boundaries of "spiritual" (non-carnal) songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) we are free to exercise our personal preferences (tastes) regarding what kind of music we like (instrumental, vocal solo, quartets, classical, etc.). The list of music that aligns with Biblical principles is extensive. There is no reason to sell out on rock music unless you want to please your flesh.

Kimberly Smith writes:

"No longer should our music be a matter of taste or opinion, it becomes a matter of discernment, obedience, and holiness, as we work out our personal sanctification."

Psalm 119:103 reveals the importance of having spiritual taste buds: "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! *yea, sweeter* than honey to my mouth!" In other words, we must cultivate a

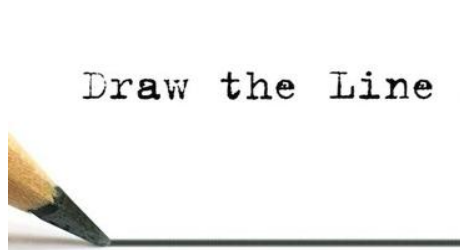


taste for only those things which are righteous, wholesome, and spiritually healthy for our lives. Our preference must align with God's way and truth.

Are you willing to change your personal preference from rock music to sacred music which aligns with God's Word? Are you ready to obey God? Once again, God has called us to "prove (examine) all things" (1 Thess. 5:21), "Abstain (refrain) from all appearance (form) of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22), and retain only those things which pass the Bible test. Everything else must be scrapped. So, change your taste buds if necessary and scrap your rock music.

Tim Fisher again 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 or more of their lives learning to love rock music. Yet they are not willing to give thirty minutes a week to learn good music."



You might conclude, "I don't know where to draw the lines between right and wrong music" or "I can't hear anything wrong." However, you cannot use this as an excuse to be undiscerning and remain in ignorance about music (1 Cor. 14:38). You can learn what wholesome music is that glorifies God and only listen to what pleases the

Lord. The problem is Christians often become desensitized and throw discernment out the window when it comes to music and therefore are not able to separate the good from the bad (Heb. 5:14).

Worldly music can be identified by its sound. You don't need a musical degree to understand that certain types of music appeal to our flesh and they create in us a desire to hear more carnal music so that we may satisfy the flesh. Pagans have known 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.

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 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)."

We must transform our thinking and listening habits (Rom. 12:2) to rid our lives of the rock idiom or style of rebellious and immorally produced music that adds a pagan and corrupting influence to our worship and sanctification. We must be willing to look at our music through the magnifying glass of God's Word (Jam. 1:23-24) and develop our spiritual senses in this area. Also, pastors must educate themselves so they can have a good sound music program for their churches. Music isn't just about *expression*; it's also about *education*. Pastors need to have a Biblical philosophy regarding music. In many churches the weakness of the pastor is to be blamed for the lowering of Biblical standards for music.

If you listen to good music, you will learn to single out the bad. Know what a genuine dollar bill is and you will spot the phony one. Below are a few APPS you can download and some websites you can order music from and stream which will help you on your new journey to change your spiritual taste buds and listening habits.

- ✓ Abiding Radio - APP
- ✓ BBN Radio (Bible Broadcasting Network) - APP
- ✓ Calvary Broadcasting (Sacred Hymns) - APP
- ✓ Sacred Turntable - APP
- ✓ The Wilds Online Store  
<https://store.wilds.org/products/recordings/>
- ✓ Majesty Music  
<https://www.majestymusic.com/recordings.html>
- ✓ [www.bereaninternetministry.org](http://www.bereaninternetministry.org) (web)  
(Studies and More - Music Groups & Other Music)
- ✓ <https://fundamentalbaptistbooks.com/product-category/music/>

You need to seek God and set yourself apart from all forms of rock music. In other words, you need to remove all questionable music and take a "music fast" from rock music and out-of-balance rhythms that cater to the flesh and not the spirit. During the fast (about 30 days) listen to only hymns and songs that are played in a

traditional, flowing, and orderly style. There are plenty of options out there. Eventually you will retrain your ears (Rev. 2:7), mind (Rom. 12:2), and heart (Ps. 19:14) to discern “spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God (1 Pet. 2:5) and begin to feed only your new nature.

Kimberly Smith again writes:

“Musical discernment will not come if we don’t actively pursue it, or if we approach the music fact with the attitude of, ‘Well, OK, but I’m going back to it my CCM when it’s over.’ We must really be seeking God’s heart on the issue, with our own hearts ready and willing to obey.”

Musical discernment is a process that rarely comes overnight. It doesn’t work this way. You likely have been desensitized to the level of rock music you are listening to and it takes time to cut through the darkness “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Eph. 4:22). However, you can eventually pick up on the sensual techniques you once followed after listening to a high standard of music that is “set-apart” from the world’s standards and which are based on God’s standards. Slowly the lights will begin to go on within your mind and spirit. You will begin to develop a greater awareness of where to draw the lines and develop Biblical convictions about good (moral) and bad (immoral) music.

I’m talking about Scriptural convictions – not merely opinions or preferences. Think of it like this. Just as a physical fast from food cleanses the body, so a fast from carnal music can sharpen our ears and also enhance our spiritual discernment in the area of music. Your prayer should be that of King Solomon who prayed “that I may discern between good and bad” (1 Kings 3:9). In short, you must change your spiritual taste buds and “thirst after righteousness” (Matt. 5:6).

A.W. Tozer remarks:

“People have been over stimulated to the place where their nerves are jaded and their tastes corrupted. Natural things have been rejected to make room for things artificial. The sacred has been secularized, the holy vulgarized and worship converted into a form of entertainment.”

Our tastes can be cultivated, and we can develop appetites for both good and evil, the fleshly and spiritual. This means our particular tastes are not a sufficient basis for deciding moral issues. Our tastes must be restricted to align with the truth for

Jesus states: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (Jn. 17:17). Our tastes must also align with God’s character for He states, “ye shall be holy; for I am holy” (Lev. 11:44). The Scriptures and character of God remain the unchanging standards of morality and ethics.

If you are not careful, you can become like the proverbial frog in hot water. You become immune to worldly music and lose your sensitivity to what is righteous and holy. When refusing to pursue musical holiness, desensitization normally occurs over time as you seek and listen to the rebellious sound of a perverted age.



As mentioned earlier:

“Almost any behavior or practice begins to look and sound normal if you are exposed to enough of it.”

In other words, familiarity with evil dulls one’s sensitivity to it. When we listen to CCM with its rhythmic confusion, we can become desensitized to unacceptable and worldly music. Anything experienced over and over again can eventually become acceptable to us even though it’s not acceptable to God (1 Pet. 2:5). The real threat is that much church music today is promoted as worship music but is only fleshly/physical religious entertainment. As someone said, “The beat goes on” and so it is within secularized and worldly Christianity which has befriended the system of the world (Jam. 4:4).

All forms of secular rock music, including modern country music, are designed to entertain, please the flesh, and promote sexuality. The songs of lost loves, broken homes, and the glorification of sex and liquor are often part of the lyrics of the songs. Country music also includes rock rhythms. Traditional *country music* and bluegrass was basically boring to many and therefore most of this type of music has morphed into *country rock* which gained popularity among the culture. But remember that sensuality in any style of music is incompatible with the Christian walk – walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:25).

Let’s cut right to the point. If you desire a Spirit-filled life you should listen to music that is not dominated or overtaken by rhythm. A Spirit-led life and rhythm-dominated music are basically in conflict with one another for rhythm gone wild is

reflective of the flesh and not the Spirit. Overpowering rhythm is not designed to create a spiritual but fleshly response.

Here is the point. All forms of rock music creates a gradual erosion of the moral fibers of individuals. Sadly, CCM is a type of pseudo-sacred music which echoes the same sensual sounds and promotes similar actions of worldly musicians and their music. Of course, Sacred Music is not meant to swing like CCM. Therefore, we must understand that the Lord does not accept all forms of worship because it is not reflective of God's holy nature, the ways God reveals Himself in Scripture, and also because certain forms of worship lacks reverence and sidesteps God's command to not love the world system (1 Jn. 2:15-17).

When we include the rhythm of rock music in our church music and listen to secular rock music, we are in some sense identifying with and endorsing "the spirit of the world" (1 Cor. 2:12). We in some measure begin to "walk according to the course of this world" (Eph. 2:2). We are to some extent becoming a "friend of the world" (Jam. 4:4) and patterning our lives after the world ("be not conformed to this world" - Rom. 12:2). So, don't STOP listening to music – just REPLACE your rock rhythms with Scriptural music that does not reflect the musical world system that Satan has strategically used to corrupt people and stand against "the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11) or his scheming plans to make us worldly, carnal, and compromised.

Think about this. God reserves the right to reject your music and worship because of His intrinsic holiness and purity.

- 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 worship of 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.
- In Amos 5:23-24 God chose to not accept the people's worship offerings.
- God did not accept the diseased animals brought to Him for worship (Mal. 1:8).
- 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 deviant form of worship which is not in accordance with the expressed pleasure and will of God. They remind us that worship can misrepresent God – His character, truth, and ways. God does not accept anything and everything we throw at Him! It must be consistent with the truth of what God’s Word teaches on Bible separation. It must be clean, pure, and align with God’s righteous nature. For instance, Jeroboam set a standard of worship that was different than the expressed will of God and which did not please God (1 Kings 12:25-33).



Worship that does not reflect God’s truth, holiness, or purity is compared to “**strange fire**” being offered up to God (Lev. 10:1; Numb. 3:4; 26:61). The word “strange” speaks of that which is 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.”

Let me update this. “**What I like**” and “**What my preference is**” is irrelevant. God may not like what you like. It might be strange fire to Him! 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 well pleasing to Him, which includes the kind of music we listen to and worship

with. Here is something that may startle many Christians. It is possible to offer something to the Lord that is not acceptable to Him and therefore rejected by Him.

Pastor David Moss writes:

“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 central standard by which today's Christian music is being measured. What pleases man, however, is the wrong standard. God established a far different measure for the believer – ‘prove what is acceptable unto the Lord’ (Ephesians 5:10).”

The Bible reminds us to “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23). We must put a guard on the door of our hearts and not allow the world to sway us in the wrong direction. This means we must remain sensitive to all forms of worldliness and sin including the idiom of rock music. The “issues of life” speak of what flows out of our hearts and determines the kind of life we live. The heart is like the fountain from which our actions spring. If the fountain is pure, the stream that flows from it will be pure. Our desire and prayer should be to maintain a heart bound to truth, purity, and what pleases God (Jn. 8:29; 2 Tim. 2:4).

“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 wandering of my will,  
And quench the kindling fire.”

### **Results of God or Man?**

We must learn to do God's work in God's way so that we will always get God's results and not man's results. Therefore, our *methodology* and *philosophy* must be Biblical and holy in order to maintain God's holy standard (1 Pet. 1:16) and



promote holiness before a generation that we are seeking to reach (2 Cor. 7:1). We must remember that results can be attributed to man's ways or doings instead of God.

Isaiah 55:8-9

"For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Isaiah 3:8

"For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings (*man's ways*) *are* against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory."

Proverbs 14:12

"There is a way (*man's way*) which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death."

There are those today who make the serious blunder of explaining and confusing the worldly works of men as being genuine works of God ("have we not prophesied in thy name?" - Matt. 7:22). This is a great travesty or mockery of God's holiness. This is because we know that only God can work in the hearts of people and change lives for only God "giveth the increase" (1 Cor. 3:7) – not man with his carnal diversions and entertaining distractions of rock music. Paul was deeply concerned about man's results instead of God's results when he stated: "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:5).


It must be understood that the mixture of entertaining and worldly music with God's Word (the Gospel) can produce manmade results instead of God's results. In fact, musical rebellion does not produce the environment for true Biblical repentance to occur in the hearts of the unsaved (2 Cor. 7:10; Lk. 24:47). This is why there are many "way side" hearts who remain hardened in their sins, just like trampled soil (Matt. 13:19). Likewise, there are many "stony" hearts where repentance cannot properly take root, much like stony soil, which cannot effectively maintain established roots.

In Matthew 13:21 Jesus spoke of this type of person:

"Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended."

If the musical style is familiar to the unsaved person, it actually comforts them instead of convicting them. The sound of rock music actually candy-coats the message behind the Christian lyrics resulting in diluting the impact of the truth. In general, many unsaved people in the CCM Movement want their lifestyles validated instead of being brought under conviction where they contemplate their own sinfulness and responsibility toward God (Rom. 12:1-2).

In the case of believers, we must remember that sensual music techniques and carnal rhythms produce carnal Christians in varying degrees which can stunt spiritual growth. These are some of the problems that exist when God's work is not done in God's way, or when a mixture occurs between righteousness and unrighteousness.



### Doing God's Work in God's Way

When we refuse to do God's work in God's way, the results are skewed or mixed. The Lord's work becomes polluted to some degree and His glory is diminished. This is why we must always seek to do God's work according to His way and live as He wants us to live.

Gary Cohen writes:

"When God's work is *not* done in God's way, then both good and evil are produced, and only He who sees all things from His seat in heaven can see on which side the balance leans."

The same rock sound in Christian music sends mixed messages. Think about this. When man tries to incorporate his own worldly ideas into evangelizing the lost, God's holy and righteous ways becomes distorted or lost and spiritual confusion and worldliness result (2 Cor. 6:14-17). When a mixture of both the good and bad or light and darkness occurs the results always lead to *compromise* (Rev. 2:14; 20; 3:16) and eventually *confusion* (Isa. 5:20) regarding what is right. Mixture always causes a spiritual and mental breakdown of God's absolute standard and eventually a complete distortion of God's holy way. CCM is an alliance between good and evil and therefore creates an unholy mixture.

Richard Tayler remarks:

"We are living in a day of blurred lines and nondescript grays. In the popular 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."

Herein lies the problem. Both the lyrics and rhythmic sounds of rock music are designed to feed the *root* of man's soulish and sinful nature (1 Cor. 2:14; Jam. 3:15; Jd. 1:19) which is the place that brings forth the *fruit* of worldliness and rebellion. Jesus taught in Matthew 7:17: "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." In other words, you don't get good fruit from a corrupt tree and rock music by nature and design is a corrupt tree. Yes, you might try and add the good fruit of Christian lyrics, but the end result is a hybrid (good and bad spiritual fruit). It's like being half worldly when listening to rock music with Christianized lyrics. We must be careful of becoming half rotted and lukewarm (Rev. 3:15) in our Christian music and living.

Allow me to reiterate once again that God expects us to "approve things that are excellent" (Phil. 1:10). The "excellent" things are the superior and best things. They are holy and righteous things. It's these things, such as sound Biblical teaching and separated music from the standards of the world that we must promote in our churches and evangelistic efforts, since they will always bring forth good fruit and lasting results.

Matthew Walker states:

"Christians must become discriminating in the area of Christian music. We must begin to listen carefully and critically in order to ensure that we are choosing the best for our music and worship. That is going to require us to become 'judges.'"

Of course, the minute you say that certain behavior is worldly or evil, you will be accused of being intolerant and judgmental. But if you go into the world expecting to be popular and well-liked, you'll be in for a rude awakening! 1 Corinthians 2:15 says, "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things" and the Bible repeatedly tells us to discern between good and bad or right and wrong. We are to be like "those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb 5:14). We are called upon "to prove all things" (test everything – including our music) and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).

## Does God Hate a Mixture?

Ezra 9:1-2 declares: “The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations ... For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands ...”



Psalms 106:35 reminds us that the people “were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.” God has always despised the mixture between His own people and the Devil’s people since this results in an unholy alliance and the people of God eventually adopting and adapting to the worldly customs of the unsaved. For this reason, God forbade this kind of alliance and mixture. Mixture always causes confusion and corruption. “Be not deceived: evil communications (*companionships*) corrupt good manners” (1Cor. 15:33).”

The application of these verses to contemporary evangelism and the use of rock music can be easily seen. First, whenever contemporary artists attempt to unite with the unsaved around a similar sound of musical rebellion, worldliness is incorporated into the Lord’s work and God’s people become corrupted with the Devil’s people. Jesus taught they both fall into the same ditch (Lk. 6:39).

Second, whenever worldly music that is designed to entertain sinners is promoted alongside the Gospel during evangelism, man’s pragmatic worldly philosophies are poured into the same pot with truth. This results in a strange brew or mixture that can cause the Gospel message to become blurred, distorted, diluted, misleading, and hidden behind the sound of musical rebellion and man-produced, emotional stimuli.

Tim Fisher said:

“We must abandon the notion that we can reach the world with a spiritual message by using a fleshly medium.”

It is impossible to do a spiritual work with carnal means. In other words, *worldly methods do not produce spiritual results*. This is because the spiritual and carnal,

the light and darkness, or righteousness and unrighteousness comprise two separate incompatible realms of existence (2 Cor. 6:14) which in God's mind cannot coincide together. This means that whenever we attempt to use a worldly method to accomplish the Lord's work, the carnal expression cannot have any positive or spiritual impact on the unsaved. It's only truth and righteousness that creates faith and spiritual light and life in the hearts of people (Matt. 4:16; Acts 4:4; Rom. 10:17).



Mixing the spiritual with the carnal is like mixing ice cream with ketchup. The spiritual and carnal do not complement one another; they oppose each other in the plan and purpose of God. Granted, souls can be saved wherever the Gospel is clearly presented (Rom. 1:16). However, whenever there is a mixture of the carnal along with the spiritual message of the Gospel the results can become drastically altered, distorted, and affected in an adverse

way. Truth can become clouded and lost due to an unholy alliance between good and evil.

Here is the main point. If Satan has used a type of music for rebellion, we must identify it and separate from it because of its intrinsic evil character and nature. Trying to duplicate it with a new face is not God's way of separation since God has commanded us to "touch not the unclean thing" (2 Cor. 6:17).

CCM advocates will sometimes misuse Romans 14:14 which states "that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean." Of course, when Paul states there is "nothing unclean" he was not saying there is no spiritual filth in the world. He was referring to issues in life which were not related to impurity and corruption, and which have no impact on our sanctification. Therefore, this passage has no application whatsoever to listening to rock music. Stop deceiving yourself!

One thing is certain, only spiritual things beget spiritual things (1 Pet. 1:23; Matt. 13:23) and only worldly things beget worldly things (Mk .7:21; Job 14:4). Souls can only be saved by the Gospel (Eph. 1:13) and not through some worldly medium or carnal diversion. Therefore, we must beware of the unholy mixture between the good and the bad. The enduring principle of Leviticus 10:10 reminds us that God

wants us to “put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean.”

This principle is true in both the Old and New Testaments. Worldly mixture breeds confusion and corruption in God’s work and our own personal lives. Mixture brings about distorted results that hinders spiritual progress and soils the true and pure work of God (Jam. 1:27). Elements of ungodly music (the perverted sounds of rock music) with elements of godly music (Biblical lyrics or words) is one example of what is being condemned in 2 Corinthians 6:14-17, Leviticus 10:10, 1 John 2:15-16, Romans 12:2 and many other Bible verses.

An old Plymouth Brethren, who was a close friend of mine, used to say, “God hates a mixture!” Let us never forget this. God wants us to steer clear of all unholy mixture (Lev. 11:47). He wants us to live within the separated limits and safe boundaries He has established for His people (2 Cor. 6:14-17). This includes refusing to mix with the musical world system. Mixing will result in yourself becoming mixed up!

### **Pragmatism or Purity?**

Today churches pattern their ministries after what “works” instead of what is holy. Pragmatism says: “If it works; use it.” “If it brings results, then it must be good.” Therefore, if using CCM results in the salvation of souls, it is worth using in evangelistic efforts. Personal preferences, peer pressure, popularity, and the politics of success lead to pragmatism which overrides God’s methodology and the Biblical mindset of obedience to Bible separation (2 Cor. 6:14-17).



Pragmatic worldly techniques designed by modern-day Church gurus with the intent to win the lost fall short of God’s standard of righteousness. They attempt in an external way to make Christianity palatable to society by blending immoral secular music techniques with moral or sacred lyrics. In this way they get people to “loosen up” and do what they feel like physically doing which can promote aggressive and carnal behavior.

Pragmatism and progressivism is seen in many facets of life, including church music. Based upon the unchanging commands of Bible separation set forth in God’s Word,

when we listen to worldly music, we bear or carry the mark of worldliness upon our lives and do not properly represent God's glory in the realm of our musical choices (1 Cor. 10:31). When caving to the culture instead of properly representing God's righteous character, we fail to remain "unspotted from the world" (Jam. 1:27).

A. W. Tozer once said:

"The temptation to introduce *new things* into the work of God has always been too strong for some people to resist. Misguided people have tried to glamorize church life who think that they know more about running God's work than Christ and His apostles did."

Instead of asking, "Does it work," we should first ask, "Is it holy?" "Is it right?" "Is it acceptable to God?" Pragmatism pollutes the worship of God's people. There are many that go to church today because it is convenient, comfortable, and carnally entertaining, without being concerned if the worship is Biblical. Jeroboam made worship *convenient* but certainly not *correct* in God's eyes (1 Kings 12:28-30). How we worship is very important to God. We can worship ignorantly (John 4:22), irreverently (Heb. 12:9), worldly (Lev. 22:20-22; Mal. 1:8), and carnally (1 Cor. 11:20-21; 29-30). To put it bluntly, we cannot worship God in our flesh and disobedience. The Bible teaches we are "to make not provision for the flesh" (Rom. 13:14).

Pastor David Moss writes:

"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."

Frank Garlock correctly assesses:

"Contrary to popular opinion, sacred music is not for entertainment."

Christian music is a vehicle to bring praise unto to the Lord. It's not created to entertain people, give them a good feeling, or show off the talents of others.

Garlock then adds:

"In the former (ministry) the musician and listener are moved by the music, by the godly character it reflects, and by the clear message of the lyrics. In the latter (entertainment) the musician and his audience are moved by the performer's ability to communicate, influence, control, and inspire."

Many churches have incorporated their own methodology of carnal entertainment in order to draw crowds, but in their attempt to draw the masses they have failed to worship the Lord in a Scriptural fashion, with a spirit of reverence and holiness (Ps. 89:7).



Sadly, Christianity is supposed to change people (Acts 17:6) but churches have allowed the world to change Christianity (Exodus 32:7; Deut. 9:12; Rev. 3:4). Instead of Christianity advancing on the world, the world advances on the church and blurs the distinctions between the lifestyles of the saved and the unsaved (1 Cor. 3:3). Chameleon Christians are a problem today. Many Christians want to blend in with the culture which would include imbibing culturally corrupt rock music.

The problem with pragmatism and Contemporary Rock Music is that it tries to *coax* people with their own sinful lifestyle instead of *convict* people about their sin. Pragmatism tries to make people feel comfortable in their sin by looking, acting, and sounding like the unsaved world. This approach mocks repentance (Acts 17:30) and is certainly not the approach of the apostles and Christ who called men to repent of their sinful ways before God (Acts 3:19; Acts 26:20; Luke 24:47) and condemned men to an everlasting Hell who fail to repent and believe on Christ (Matt. 23:33; John 3:36; Rom. 3:3-6).

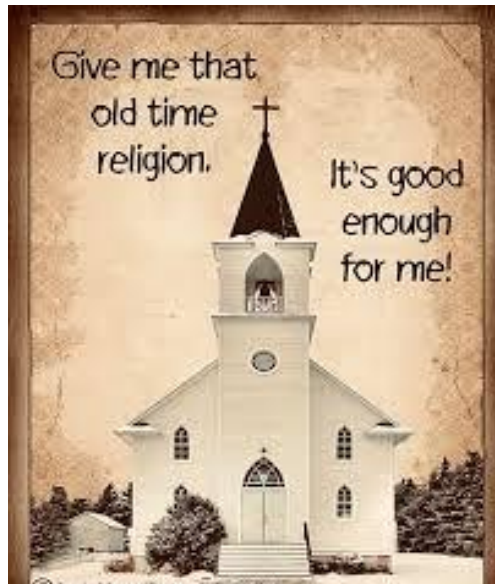
As a result of the Contemporary Christian Movement, many people have become the products of pragmatism instead of being saved through the power of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16). Many have become followers of entertainment instead of followers of Christ (Luke 9:23).

Tozer is also on record as saying:

“Any objection to the carryings on of our present gold-calf Christianity is met with the triumphant reply, ‘But we are winning them!’ And winning them to what? To true discipleship? To cross-carrying? To self-denial? To separation from the world? To crucifixion of the flesh? To holy living? To nobility of character? To a despising of the world’s treasures? To hard self-discipline? To love for God? To total committal to Christ? Of course the answer to all these questions is no.”

The death of pragmatism will only occur when God’s preachers and people acknowledge the right of Jesus Christ to control the activities of the local assemblies, since He is the spiritual Head of the Church (Eph. 1:22; Rev. 1:13).

## Should Our Motto Be: “Give Me that Show Time Religion?”



We live in a day when unsaved people are lured into a church in order to feel or experience something, instead of hearing from God. We live in a time of “feel good” religion instead of “old time” religion. We also live in an era of “show time” religion instead of old-time religion. Many are singing a different tune today, “Give me that Show Time Religion,” instead of “Give me that Old Time Religion.”

For this reason, seeker friendly churches attempt to win people to Christ without trying to offend them. Many church gurus claim we must befriend sinners by accommodating their lifestyles; however, little do they realize that these same compromising churches in some sense set themselves up as an enemy to God and His ways (Jam. 4:4).

The attempt to mimic heathen practices of unsaved lifestyles downplays sin. We must remember that we cannot reach people without offending them (Gal. 1:6; 2 Tim. 4:2; Matt. 13:21). The Bible speaks of the offense of the cross (Gal. 5:11). The message of the Gospel reveals people as dirty, low-down, good-for-nothing, rotten sinners in God’s sight (Rom. 3:10-12, 23), who are going to Hell (Rom. 6:23), and who need to be saved (Rom. 10:13). This is an offensive message but it’s the truth that sets people free (Jn. 8:32). Yes, a person’s soul is valuable to God (Mk. 8:36), but that same soul is exceedingly sinful and in need of redemption and salvation.

The meeting house for the Church is about God, His Word, and bringing glory to His name (1 Cor. 1:30). It’s not about trying to impress people with a night club atmosphere, entertainment, and gyrating rock music that mimics the lifestyles of the unregenerate (“Be not ye therefore like unto them” – Matt. 5:8). Frankly, when we are living a Christian life that truly honors God, a life that portrays holiness in the best possible light, we will actually become a “savour of death” (2 Cor. 2:16) to the lost - not a sanctuary to cover-up their sins. The meeting of the saints are to be “holy convocations” (Lev. 23:2,4, 37) – not meetings that accommodate the ungodly with their own cultural corruption.

One author remarked:

“The primary message of the church should not be, ‘We’re a nice place; you’ll like us.’ Instead, the message should be: ‘This is a holy place where sin is despised.’”

While befriending the sinner, we must not become like the sinner. Our music and mannerisms should be that which “becometh the gospel of Christ” (Phil. 1:27) and also “becometh holiness” (Tit. 2:3). In other words, our conduct should be suitable or befitting to that which is sacred and reverent, so it properly reflects the Gospel message and character of God’s holiness.

### **The Glory of God or the Glory of Man?**

If God’s character is not properly represented in music, then He does not get the glory. Instead, man receives the glory. Rock music is not designed to glorify God for its intrinsic nature was designed by the Devil to glorify sex, drugs, and rebellion against God. So God’s glory is essentially stolen from Him through the use of rock music.

But God declares in Isaiah 42:8:

“I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.”

Glory can be stolen from the Lord in various ways through Christian rock music and cultural worldliness.

- ❖ God’s glory is stolen when worship and music is geared to gratifying the audience through worldly lyrics and sound.
- ❖ God’s glory is stolen when the musician’s performance is showcased so people’s attention is drawn to the performer.
- ❖ God’s glory is stolen when the musician (male or female) is provocative and worldly in appearance and actions.
- ❖ God’s glory is stolen when people are self-seeking, wanting electrifying experiences and personal gratification through their worship.
- ❖ God’s glory is stolen when flashing lights, smoke, sound effects, and other manmade background techniques fascinate and captivate people, which in some measure overtakes and replaces worship.

- ❖ God's glory is stolen when entertainment and the praise of man is mistaken for worship.
- ❖ God's glory is stolen when mixture occurs between righteousness and unrighteousness, or light and darkness.

1 Corinthians 10:31 declares:

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do (*including worship*), do all to the glory of God."

Colossians 3:17 similarly states:

"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."



There is much "golden calf worship" (Ex. 32) occurring in the Church today. It is rooted in self, sin, and a refusal to separate from the world system.

What about entertainment? Entertainment automatically detracts from God's glory. We should be leery of the marriage of entertainment and worship. Much of so-called worship of today is geared around entertainment and frosted with Christian lyrics to insure the blessing of God.

Tozer concludes:

"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."

John Coblenz also writes of CCM songs:

"The entertaining nature of these songs make them cheap – shallow performances, shadows of the real but so energetic as to fool most listeners."

Worship is often exchanged for infatuation (emotion-packed performances) and man is often worshipped more than the Creator. There is a real nauseating side to religious entertainment that is disgusting to God (Matt. 6:5; 23:5; John 12:43). Many people have their ears tickled from a musical perspective and often ask: "Isn't that singer amazing?" And the wave of clapping assures the performer that it is so.

Tim Fisher again remarks:

“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. Okay, this is a really crazy group, not everyone looks like this in the CCM Movement! But many CCM singers by their dress, looks, and actions lack reverence toward a holy God. They dress and act the 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 (2 Cor. 5:17). 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 very popular CCM singer himself, 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*, Printing, 1982).

He’s right about this. Instead of dying to self (Jn. 12:24) many are promoting themselves in their songs and the way they present themselves while religiously performing in front of others. Of course, I’m not suggesting that every CCM singer possesses a spirit of showmanship and wants to exalt himself and steal away God’s glory (Isa. 48:11). However, the style and nature of the music, including the

movements, dress, and actions often associated with this movement, 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.

1 Peter 1:16

"Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

God is holy, glorious, and beautiful, and our music should reflect this fact. But a sound that reflects Satan's world of drugs, sex, and rebellion cannot reflect God's purity, holiness, and beauty (His glory). 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 was created to convey the message of open sexuality and rebellion against God. Therefore, God's people cannot possibly glorify God (who He is) when adopting this rebellious sound of a debased culture. Rock music is the perverted sounds of secular humanism and a culture that is in rebellion against God.

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."

### **Amoral or Immoral?**

- ▶ Is music morally neutral?
- ▶ Are we free to use any style/form of music?
- ▶ What is the role of culture in music?

It's interesting that secular rock artists vehemently deny the neutrality of rock music including the musical sound used in the rock idiom. They realize that their rock music is not amoral (without morals or ethics) or neutral in sound but instead portrays immorality and

general rebellion against God. But Christian rock artists blindly embrace the neutrality of musical sound so they can mimic the same sound of secular rock music while adding some religious lyrics or themes to it. Frank Garlock is correct when concluding that “the world recognizes principles which some Christians refuse to accept.” In other words, there is a sensuality in sound. The secular rock artists know it, while the CCM artists deny it, and live in musical “La La land.” They are out of touch with reality.

Listen to the secular rock artists who vehemently deny the neutrality of their music. “Listen, rock ‘n’ roll AIN’T CHURCH. It’s nasty business. You gotta be nasty too.

## IS MUSIC NEUTRAL, AMORAL?

It you’re a goody, goody, you can’t sing or play it” (Lita Ford, rock singer, Los Angeles Times, August 7, 1988). “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).

“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).

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).

Author Steve Lawhead, a defender of CCM, makes an interesting statement and admission 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."

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 (Lk. 16:8). When asked this question, “So you think Rock Music is very sensual?” He reacted quickly with this reply, “It’s perverse.” This is because Satan and 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 argue that all music is neutral or amoral (meaning there is no morality issue related to music).

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. Jesus taught “for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light” (Lk. 16:8). Of course, the unsaved are not wiser in spiritual matters but in their zeal and pursuit; howbeit, for selfish and temporary goals. The application of this verse to our study and Christian life is that we should in some ways reflect the unsaved (their zeal, wisdom, and pursuit) but while diligently pursuing spiritual and eternal values like godly living and music. “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*” (Eph. 5:17) even in the area of music.

Witchdoctors and secular rock artists, and those involved in the occult will confess that rock music is created for a sexual and even Satanic response. 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.

## TESTIMONY

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.”

Author Michael Ventura writes:

“In Haitian voodoo, as in Africa, the drum is holy. The drummer is seen merely as the servant of the drum ... through his drum he has great influence on the

ceremony. Each *loa* [demons] prefers a fundamentally different rhythm, and the drummer knows them all and all their variations. He can often invoke possession by what he plays ...”

In other words, by using certain drum rhythms, the drummer is very aware that he can purposely cause demonic possession. Of course, I’m not suggesting that all drumming or rock and jazz music calls up evil spirits. What I am questioning is why Christians would want to imitate drum rhythms that can be traced directly to those used in pagan worship? Why would we want to imitate things that are at the other end of the spectrum of evil? Why imitate that which is evil and unholy? God is not the author or imitator of evil, and neither should we be as His children. Instead, we are to be imitators of God (Eph. 5:1) – not imitators of rebellious music.

With the mention of drums and beats we must raise the question: “Is there a demon beat?” Of course, nobody believes there is a demon

## THE DEMON BEAT

behind every bush and backbeat. Nor do fundamentalists believe listening to CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) is summoning demons and that listening to it will inevitably result in people falling into the sins of fornication and adultery. Instead, Biblical separatists realize that strong backbeats were a specific rhythmic pattern that Satan has historically used in the advent of rock music and continues to use to promote all kinds of rebellion within society.

This means rhythms written on paper are not demonized but they are presented and played in such a way to promote and proliferate Satan’s “last days” agenda on society (2 Tim. 3:1-7). Furthermore, the Bible teaches we are not to participate or associate with those things which demons have promoted and used to destroy the lives of people, such as rock music. The Bible says, “I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils” or participate with those very things that demons promote (1 Cor. 10:20).

Playing CCM does not mean I am *directly* associating with demons or calling up demons, but I am *indirectly* promoting and endorsing a paganized form of music that the Devil and demons have used to adversely impact the lives of millions of people. The Bible clearly teaches we are not to directly nor indirectly come into agreement or partnership with Satan’s agenda of darkness for “what concord hath Christ with Belial?” (2 Cor. 6:15).

## TESTIMONY

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 those who listen to CCM are Satan worshippers! No, I'm not saying that CCM singers are the same as Satanists with Satanic bands. I'm not concluding they have no love for Christ. 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? This is a direct violation of Scripture (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

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). We cannot turn a blind eye to how Satan has specifically used a type of beat and sound to advance his kingdom of darkness. Why would Christians want to play around with it and play it?

Remember that the Christian can be subject to blindness (Rev. 3:14-17) in relation to areas of sin and acts of rebellion against God. "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (2 Pet. 1:9). We must be careful we don't develop blind spots in our lives where we are no longer sensitive to sanctification and the Spirit's transforming work in certain areas of our lives (Gal. 5:18; 2 Cor. 3:18).

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."

## TESTIMONY

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."

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."

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!"

A study was done of teenagers and their music and was released in *Psychology Today* under the title "It's the Sound That Does It." The researchers reported that 70 percent of teens said they judged songs (like or disliked them) more by the sound

than by the words. Many, in fact, did not even know the words of their favorite songs.

Again, the sound of rock music is conveying something. It conveys rebellion and rejection of God's righteous ways. This is why Christians should not adopt the rock idiom into their music and worship. It's cultural and musical rebellion against God and whenever we seek to join the good with the bad, we create distortion, confusion, and to some degree ignite the unspiritual element in our souls.

### **Are the Good Old Ways Archaic?**

Many criticize the "old ways" of evangelism as being archaic, out-of-date, and "out-of-touch" with a modern-day secular society. However, this reasoning is absurd. Is the Gospel message out of date? No. Has God's basic way to present the Gospel and evangelize changed (1 Cor. 2:4; 1 Pet. 3:16)? No. God wants us to evangelize with the simple Gospel message and in the power of the Holy Spirit without compromising truth and holiness. The good old way is still the Bible way!



A. Skevington Wood said:

"It is the temptation of this pragmatic age to presume that technique is the secret of evangelism."

It's interesting that not once in Scripture is music stated to be used as an evangelistic technique to win souls. Garlock agrees when he states that "it would indeed be difficult to prove, from the Word, that music is to be used as a tool for evangelization."

Music and worship was always centered around God's saints and for their edification (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16-17). Scripture never confirms the use of music as a necessary and primary vehicle to win the lost.

Evangelist Ken Lynch remarks:

"One must remember that Christian music was not, and is not, designed to reach the lost; therefore the excuse that we 'must use the music the sinner is used to and can identify with in order to reach him' is invalid."

Yes, it's true God may use the clear and unadulterated message of the Gospel, when presented in music, to bring about conviction to the heart of the sinner, but it's not the perverted and sensual sound of rock music that produces the conviction. We must remember that the power is in the message – not the music or methodology for “the gospel of Christ ... is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16).

The *medium* of music does not save souls; the *message* of the Gospel saves souls (“the gospel of your salvation” - Eph. 1:13). To argue that people need a certain genre or style of music (a rock sound) to be saved or drawn into the net of salvation is illogical and untrue! This is presuming upon the sovereignty of God (Jn. 6:44). We do not need man's cleverness, enticements, gimmicks, phony emotional appeals and manipulative strategizing to save souls (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

I've always said:

“It's not the good old *days* but good old *ways* that we must follow.”

Jeremiah 6:16 declares:

“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”

Sadly, many are not willing to follow God's good way in the realm of music. The old paths have to do with obedience, honoring God's holiness, following His plan for Bible separation from the world, and today winning souls in a way that honors God. Any other way is foreign to God's plan and purpose for evangelism and personal living.

Lehman Strauss once commented about the new musical ways: "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."

The good old ways are not the pagan ways! The old Bible saying is still applicable: “**Learn not the way of the heathen**” (Jer. 10:2). If it looks like the world and sounds like the world; it is the world! God wants us to keep the old spiritual landmarks in place (Prov. 22:28) and refuse to move in any other direction but the right direction (Joshua 1:7). Christ has summoned us to “hold fast” (Rev. 2:25) to the truth and what is right until He returns in the event of the Rapture.

## Can People Be Saved at Christian Rock Concerts?

People are sometimes saved in spite of Contemporary Christian Music – not because of it (Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 1:21). In a similar way, people are saved despite of ecumenicalism – not because of it. For instance, God may permit people to be saved at a CCM concert or ecumenical gathering when the Gospel is clearly presented (1 Cor. 15:1-2), without God approving of the worldly or carnal music (Titus 2:12) or ecumenical mixture with liberals. In a similar way, God permitted people to be divorced (Mark 10:4-5) while hating divorce (Malachi 2:16). God hates that which is unholy; however, the penetrating power of God’s Word (Heb. 4:12) and Spirit (John 16:8) can sometimes override worldliness and prick the hearts of the hearers (Acts 2:37), resulting in the salvation of the soul (Acts 2:41).

God honors the truth of the Gospel in spite of the fallacies and failures of those who may be presenting it.

One man said to me, “Pastor, I was saved out of context.” What he meant was that a preacher was preaching on a text that had nothing to do with the Gospel, but he applied the Gospel to the text and this man was saved. So, indeed, he was saved out of context!

**OUT OF CONTEXT?**

Here is the point. Despite the fallacies of men – not because of them - people can be saved by God’s Gospel power and inner work in the heart (Rom. 1:16; 2:4). “Salvation is of the LORD” (Jonah 2:9). Of course, this is not an excuse to put up with worldliness or misrepresenting God’s glory in the local churches. However, at the same time we must always recognize the power and life-changing aspect of God’s Word (Heb. 4:12).

I once read about a man who was saved at the bottom of the ocean floor. He found a Gospel tract, read it, and was saved. I also remember hearing the testimony of a man who said he passed by a church one day as an unsaved sinner. The windows were open, and as he passed by, he heard the people singing the words, “Isn’t it grand to be a Christian.” These words kept passing through the man’s mind until he asked someone how to become a Christian and was led to Christ through the message of the Gospel. The point is it’s always the truth that sets people free – not rock rhythms (Jn. 8:32, 36).

## Does the End Justify the Means?

Of course, the salvation of souls should never be promoted at the expense of God's character and illegitimate forms of evangelism (Lev. 11:44; 1 Pet. 1:15-16). The salvation of souls is no excuse to promote evil that good may come about (Rom. 3:8 – "Let us do evil that good may come"). This is the depraved and warped philosophy that the end justifies the means (1 Tim. 5:20-21).

### The end justifies the means

Meaning: If our objective is good,  
then it doesn't  
matter if the way we achieve it is  
bad or wrong or evil

In God's view, *the end does not justify the means; the means justify the end*. In other words, how we win the lost is just as important as winning them. Mixing the Gospel (the means) with rock rhythms

(worldliness and carnality) to attract people and get them saved (the end) is not justified in God's Word.

Kimberly Smith illustrates this:

"Pharaoh's magicians spoke 'truth' when they told him God was sending the plagues. Does this vindicate the use of evil magicians for spreading the gospel?"

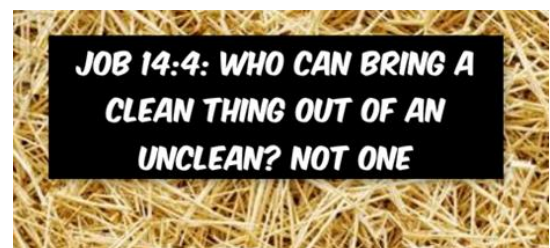
God has never justified doing wrong for the sake of bringing about a good ending. This is because God is holy in all of His ways and works (Deut. 32:4). God is not a worldly pragmatist. Psalm 145:17 once again declares: "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." The same should be true of us in our living, musical choices, outreach, and evangelistic efforts.

A. W. Tozer once said:

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

Let me reiterate four things we have studied.

First, nothing good can come out of evil (John 6:63 – "the flesh profiteth nothing"). Job observed that nothing clean can come out of that which is unclean. "Who can bring a clean *thing* out of an unclean? not one" (Job 14:4).



This is not only true in relation to the womb (the birth of children) but in principle it's related to anything that is evil or unclean. Intrinsic goodness does not come out of something that is intrinsically evil.



Once again, 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 or sanctification to rotten, bad, and evil fruit.

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). If the musical sound is sick, adding Christian lyrics is like putting a Band-Aid on a disease that requires major surgery. Attempting to redeem unacceptable music by adding Christian lyrics is like adding oil to water. Remember that Satan's key word in our generation is “associate” but God's key word for believers today is “separate.”



Rock music by design has been historically associated with debased sex, the world of the occult, alcohol, drugs, and rebellion against God and therefore should have no part in our Christian life for we are commanded to “have no fellowship (*participation, association, partnership*) with the unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph. 5:11).

Second, God's holiness and glory should always be vindicated in the work of the Lord (“ye shall be holy; for I am holy” - Lev. 11:44).

Third, God is “Lord of the harvest” (Luke 10:2) and does not need CCM music and rock musicians to help save souls. To think that certain people can’t be saved and won’t be saved without the modern use and bait of CCM music is an absurdity and travesty regarding God and His ways. This philosophy doubts God’s *sovereignty* (John 6:44; 12:32), His *power* to save (John 16:8; 1 Cor. 2:4-5), and the divinely ordained *method* He uses to save souls (Mark 16:15; Rom. 1:16).

Fourth, using a rock idiom to evangelize confuses the message of repentance (Lk. 5:32; 2 Pet. 3:9) which involves a different attitude about sin, a desire to be freed from sin’s power and no longer live in rebellion against God.

Vance Havner concluded:

“It takes a radical break to turn a man from earth’s trash to heaven’s treasure.”



All true repentance involves turning away from sin (1 Thess. 1:9-10). When a person repents, they repudiate sin and desire to be released from its power (Isa. 55:7). Repentance is to be sorry enough to quit sinning! The worldly atmosphere created at CCM concerts is not conducive to repentance occurring in the hearts of people. The flickering lights, smoke, pandemonium of people dancing, the party spirit, and the carnal diversions of rock music can easily breed confusion and produce converts of pragmatism instead of converts of Christ.

Martin Bobgan comments about pragmatic evangelism:

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

To summarize, God is not using contemporary music to save souls, nor is He pleased with a mixture between light and darkness or righteousness and unrighteousness (2 Cor. 6:14-17). God has always despised worship that is defiled and pagan (Lev. 10:1) and can only accept worship that reflects His nature (1 Chron. 16:29) and the natural creative order of music which was designed by the God of order (1 Cor. 14:33, 40). We rejoice whenever souls are saved, but we rejoice even more when souls are saved in an atmosphere that honors God’s holiness and glorifies Him (1 Cor. 10:30).

The idea that is being promoted by many Christians today who embrace CCM goes something like this. “Nobody is perfect. So even if we are disobedient at times, God still loves us. Therefore, it should not matter how we worship because God will always love and accept us.” Of course, this is an unbiblical idea and mindset. It’s true that 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 doing what is right in every facet of our lives, including our music and worship (John 14:15; 1 John 5:2).

To summarize, our music and 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).

### **What are the Excuses CCM Artists Give to Justify their Music?**

Here are five main excuses.

- We need rock music to worship God.

This is a lame excuse. Secular sounds of loud dance-band rock beats, gyrating movements, entertainment, a party-spirit, and an electric atmosphere is neither the cause nor purpose of true worship (Jn. 4:24; 1 Cor. 10:31).



Nowhere in the Bible do we see that genuine worship needs to be induced or triggered by some specific external stimuli of musical 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 through the Holy Spirit (Ps. 4:4; Job 35:10; Jn. 16:13-14). This means we certainly don’t need specific rock beats and theatrics to worship God. Just the opposite is true, all that we need is for God to communicate with us inwardly so we can “worship *him* in spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:24; Phil. 3:3). “Be still, and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10).

- Martin Luther set his hymns to the tunes (worldly songs) of his day.

It's assumed that CCM artists are doing the same thing Luther did in his day. They are taking the rock style of music and changing it into spiritual songs by adding Christian lyrics. However, 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. However, all of their hymns still remained 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.

Robert Harrell confirms:

"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).

Luther himself said, "I place music next to theology and give it the highest praise." 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.

- We need to use rock music to win souls for Christ.



In other words, the argument is that a paganized world cannot be reached without assimilating with the culture and therefore we must draw them into the net of salvation by using the same rock sound and techniques that secular rock artists use. As mentioned earlier, this is an affront on the sovereignty of God (John 6:44; 12:32).

God is “Lord of the harvest” (Luke 10:2) – not CCM artists using the techniques of depraved men who brought immoral rock music into existence. Salvation is not the result of any method but is the result of the Gospel which “is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16). Remember again that heresy of *method* is just as evil as heresy of *message*. When Paul entered Corinth, he only had the Word and the Spirit and souls were saved (1 Cor. 2:1-5). He did not use worldly and carefully crafted techniques that appeal to the carnal side and vulnerability of men.

A fleshly medium cannot save souls. Not in a trillion years! Paul did not attempt to use any twisted unscriptural methods to win people to Christ so he could be sure “That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:5). The argument that souls cannot be saved without simulating or copying rock music is “the wisdom of man” and we know that “God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world” (1 Cor. 1:20). This theory is utterly foolish! It’s God that gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:7) – not CCM. Millions of people were saved before CCM was introduced into the hallowed halls of the Church.

As mentioned previously, music and worship is not for unbelievers but believers. It is a gift of God to allow believers to give expression of gratitude to God for who He is, what He’s done, and particularly for our salvation (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

Doug Bachorik comments:

“The church must also be careful not to substitute musical entertainment for the preaching of the Word as a way to evangelize. Although music can be used to aid in spreading the gospel, its primary Biblical roles are worship and teaching.”

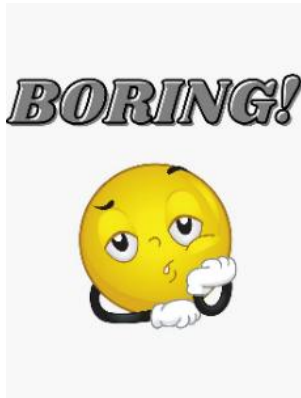
➤ We cannot put God in a box.

Yes, this is the old “Don’t put God in a box” argument. Many CCM artists still use this lame excuse that suggests we should not limit God. However, God is holy and places limitations on Himself (Lev. 11:44). “The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works” (Ps. 145:17). God 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.

- Church services and worship would be boring without CCM.



This brings us back to the first excuse for justifying CCM. Any Christian who comes to this conclusion has just admitted that it is the unnatural and immorally based rhythms in their time of worship that appeal to them, not the words! They are following the master of rhythm and replacing true worship (Jn. 4:24) with their alleged felt needs (Matt. 6:24). They are caught in a web or trap of needing a specific sound that creates the same emotional response and feelings in order to worship God. Worship is never boring when we

simply open our hearts to the Lord and give back to Him the glory that He deserves (1 Chron. 16:29; Ps. 29:2; 96:8). We don't worship to GET but worship to GIVE. This is never boring!

Bottom line. Jiving for Jesus is not true worship. Rocking for God is not holy worship. Don't be a selfish worshipper. Don't worship to get what you want. Instead, worship and return praise to Him, praise that is not fueled by a selfish, worldly, fleshly, feel-good experience. The repeated phrases in Scripture "unto the Lord" (Ps. 29:2), "unto Him" (Ps. 33:2-3), and "unto our God" (Ps. 40:3) should be applied to music which keeps our music from becoming self-entertaining, self-pleasing, and self-centered.

The problem is not with Biblical and traditional Sacred Music (TSM). The problem lies within the hearts of Christians who create an appetite for upbeat music that entertains, feeds the flesh, and mimics the world system. The only way out of the mentality that traditional/orderly worship is boring is to reprogram our thinking ("the renewing of your mind" - Rom. 12:2) and once again think Biblically about music and worship.

### **New or Old?**

God has not called us to rock the Gospel. This is because 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). Out of our position in Christ (“**all things become new**”) must flow our practice of new life. Notice the Bible does not say that “all things are altered to become more acceptable or palatable to us and others.” Nothing we do, including listening to music, is to reflect the old way of life. 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 same forms, old sinful techniques, and carnally based 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.

And yes, our new life is accompanied with our “**new song**” (Ps. 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1). This is a song of the redeemed – not a new genre of Christian rock music that reflects the unredeemed way of life. A New Birth, new creation, and a new life results in a new song which is totally unlike the worldly songs and music of the present age. The new song refers to a renewal song, a purer and nobler song that would reflect David’s deliverance. “**And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God**” (Ps. 40:3).

As already mentioned, this Bible passage does not actually mention that people would hear the new song but see it (“**many shall see it**”). This means people would see the joyful and liberating transformation in David’s life and be encouraged in their own faith and God’s power of deliverance. One thing is certain. The new song of a new way of life, a life of redemption and true freedom, has nothing to do with the old song of the previous life. They contradict one another. They are at odds. The contrast and difference is clearly seen and heard.



Let's be very honest at this point. CCM music is actually an old song of worldliness that is still a reflection of the old way of an unredeemed life. It's reminiscent of worldly sounds that reflect 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.

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 experience. This should be true of us today. We are a new people. We have been recreated (2 Cor. 5:17), born again, given new life, and we now have a new song. It is the song of the redeemed or the soul set free. 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).

By definition, this new song must portray God's moral character and purity (1 Pet. 1:15), which is reflected in His musical order and ethics, or else it would not possess a quality of newness. Therefore, to use this verse to support the use of Christian rock music is an illegitimate comparison to what people actually saw in David's life. There is nothing new with the sound of rock music. It's still marked by impurity and confusion. Trying to Christianize it with words does not make it new. An old secularized and perverted sound with new Christian lyrics is comparable to putting a bad apple in a barrel of good apples without the bad spoiling the good. It does not work. Whenever we mix good with evil it is done at the expense of God's holiness.

## Is There a Day of Reward Coming?



Yes. Payday is coming! There will be a time of future reward for all Christians.

Revelation 22:12

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

Someday every Christian will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and be rewarded for his life of service and overall manner of living on Earth.

2 Corinthians 5:10 states:

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done (*be rewarded according to our earthly conduct*), whether *it be* good or bad.”

Compromise never pays! Paul revealed elsewhere that there will be much wood, hay, and stubble or fleshly and worldly works which will not stand the test at this final examination (1 Cor. 3:12-14). Those things which we have done which were contrary to God’s way of holiness will not pass the test in the coming day. This will be true of our compromise with rock music and a type of music (lyrics and sound) that Satan has used for His kingdom of darkness.

What people call *contemporary* is often only *temporary*. This is true of rock music in all of its forms. Music which is labeled as “**contemporary**” is really only “**temporary**” because our use of it and obsession with it will not result in eternal reward for “the world passeth away” (1 Jn. 2:17). There is no eternal value in it. Contemporary Rock Music will not pass the test at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It will end up as “wood, hay,” and “stubble” (1 Cor. 3:12). Rock music along with its

contemporary concerts and smoke-filled stages and entertaining performances will go up in smoke!

2 John 1:8 reminds us:

**“Look to yourselves** (*examine yourselves*), **that we** (*all of us as God’s saints*) **lose not those things which we have wrought** (*the teachings and truths Paul gave to the saints*), **but that we** (*all of us together*) **receive a full reward.”**

This means we can lose reward, which otherwise we could have gained, if we had not followed teachings and musical philosophies which run contrary to truth and righteousness.

Beware of becoming sidetracked by following false teaching and engaging in carnal living. Jesus Christ will sort it out in the coming day. There will be gains and losses (Heb. 6:10).

Every believer ought to be working for a reward, to be able to hear the Lord say someday, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:21; 2 Tim. 4:7–8).

“We must all bow down at the judgment seat of Christ  
We must give account  
For the things we've done with our lives.  
I will live my life for Jesus Christ,  
So that in eternity my life will be  
Gold and silver and precious stones.”

It has been wisely observed:

“We are sent to bless the world, but never are we told to compromise with it. Our true blessing lies in a spiritual withdrawal from all that builds on dust.”

We must remember that a proper judgment and assessment of music (1 Thess. 5:21-22; Jn. 7:24) which honors God is based upon the believer’s loyalty to Him and doing what is right and holy in God’s eyes. God has called us to be faithful, honest, and Biblical (1 Cor. 4:2)

We need to remember that it’s not about the culture but the commandments of God (Rom. 12:2); it’s not about style but Scripture (Jn. 17:17, 19); it’s not about preference but pleasing the Lord (Jn. 8:29); it’s not about genre but the general

teaching of the Biblical and historic doctrine of separation that we must adhere to (2 Cor. 6:14-17; 7:1). CCM artists are dangling the shiny objects related to rock music before separated/conservative Christians to entice them to move in the same direction they have gone. Don't take the bait!

My mentor, John Miles, president of the Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music, wrote: "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.'"

It's time for some application questions. Evaluate yourself honestly.

- 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?
- What direction is your music taking you?
- What response is the music promoting?
- Does it stir your flesh or spirit?
- Does it reinforce fleshly or holy appetites?
- Does it promote holiness or sensuality?
- Is it pulling you away from Christ?
- Is it tempting to you in any way?
- Are you cultivating reverence and spiritual maturity in your music and worship (Ps. 89:7)?
- Is your music mimicking the world's music?
- Is it attempting to mix the good with the bad?
- Is the music hindering, distracting, or helping your spiritual walk?
- Is it pulling us toward Christ or sin?
- Is it lifting me up or locking me down, placing me under some form of bondage or slavery (1 Cor. 6:12).

- 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 rock form of worship instead of God?
- Does your music help or hinder you and others?
- Is your music forming or deforming you (Gal. 4:19)?
- Have you asked God to change your heart concerning the type of music that you listen to?
- Have you come to the place of worshipful surrender to God (Rom. 12:1-2)?
- Are you ready to surrender your music to God and His mastery over your life?

You must face the music (your music!) and surrender yourself and music to God. Out with the bad – in with the good!

Romans 12:1

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies (*our ears, eyes, hands, feet*) a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service*” (*worship*).

“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.”

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 does not pass the test of Biblical separation (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 6:14-17).
- Change 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 rework 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 heart 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).

Like Daniel, we must purpose in our hearts to not defile ourselves (Dan. 1:8) with rock music in all of its forms (secular or religious).

“Standing by a purpose true,  
 Heeding God’s command,  
 Honor them, the faithful few!  
 All hail to Daniel’s band!  
 Dare to be a Daniel,  
 Dare to stand alone!  
 Dare to have a purpose firm!  
 Dare to make it known.”

We can be certain that Daniel’s band was not a Christian Rock band! Here is a prayer you can pray.

“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.”

**TESTIMONY**

A 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!"

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Ps. 11:3). This means we must take the initiative to destroy those things which want to destroy us! This is true of all rock music. We must rid our lives of it and not look back (Gen. 9:26; Luke 9:62).



**DESTROY  
WHAT  
DESTROYS  
YOU.**

2 Corinthians 7:1 commands us to rid our lives of all those things that are robbing us of spiritual and godly living. **"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness (spiritual contamination) of the flesh (sins related to the outward human body of flesh) and spirit (sins related to the inward life or immaterial part of human existence – evil motives, thoughts, lusts), perfecting holiness in the fear of God"** (reaching the goal of a holy and consecrated life by possessing a deep and profound reverence for God).

This means we must stay in tune with the beauty of God – His holiness, righteousness, and ways – instead of going out of tune with our music and living. It means we must choose sides in life (Josh. 24:15). Life is a choice. You only do what you want to do!

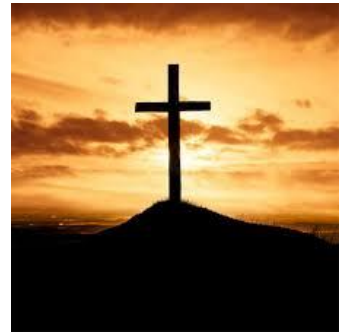
Many will tell you that everyone has his or her own point of view on music. But what we need is God's point of view! This is because God is always right about everything. This means we must counteract culture when it opposes God's Word. It's not about going along to get along.

**SAME OLD  
SAME OLD  
SAME OLD  
SAME OLD  
SAME OLD  
SAME OLD  
SAME OLD**

Today CCM artists are still saying we must meet the felt needs of the new generation and catch up with the culture. Of course, they were saying the same thing back in the early 70's with the introduction of rock music into the local churches. Catching up with the culture is the same old reused and rehashed argument used by the original musical artists who brought CCM into the Church. There is nothing new under the sun when it comes to musical compromise.

God has not called us to shift with the culture but counteract the culture that reflects the musical world system of rock music (1 Jn. 2:15-17) which has NOT changed the specific message being conveyed by its sound. It's a sound/message of rebellion against God, a rebel and rogue sound of rhythmic confusion created to destroy and not build up the lives of people.

Often the world system is reflected in culture. In fact, the culture of rock music is an integral part of the world system that must be countered with truth and Biblical values (3 Jn. 1:4; Jn. 8:32; 17:17). We cannot afford to reject the basic tenants of Bible separation which identifies a specific form of worldly music (1 Thess. 5:22) that has contaminated society and which leads many Christians into different aspects of unsanctified living. We can never forget that Christ died to "deliver us from this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4).



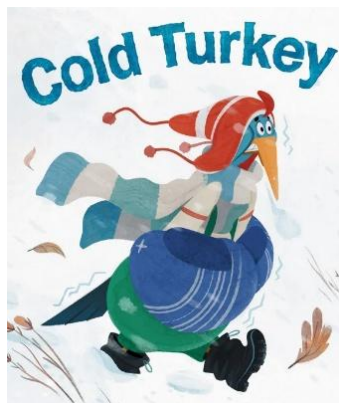
Remember that *the plain things are still the main things, and the main things are still the plain things*. When embracing the commands of separation we must agree that we are to not conform (Rom. 12:2) to the culturally corrupt standards established by the world system (2 Tim. 4:10). We are summoned to separate from all apostate, pagan, religious systems and the music that reflects the world of paganism, a musical system that has been a creative tool in the hands of Satan to wreck the lives of people throughout its historical entrance into the world up to the present (1 Cor. 10:20; 2 Cor. 6:14-17).

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."

Are you willing and ready to remove CCM and all rock music forms from your life? Instead of getting angry, defensive, and rebellious, just submit to God's way for your life ("Submit yourselves therefore to God" - Jam. 4:7). And do it right now!

You must make a choice, and it may not be an easy one. Keep your CCM or discard it in its entirety. You should be willing to give up all your rights to all of your music to follow Christ's way, to properly represent Christ (glorify Him) and to be a shining light in the midst of moral depravity and darkness. Let God recapture your heart, convict you, and show you the truth about godly patterns of music.

Is your music on the rocks or is it Scripturally balanced in both lyrics and sound? Don't straddle the fence. Separate from it and stop incorporating rock music into your daily life. Conform to God's standard and don't compromise with the world any longer.



Quitting CCM and all rock music needs to be done "cold turkey." This is the best approach to removing a bad habit. For instance, we never counsel an alcoholic to keep drinking less and less alcohol until he is dry. We never counsel someone who is involved with pornography to look at less and less porn until finally they are able to give it up entirely. It doesn't work this way. The same is true about the bad habit of rock music. You must take a clean break from all rock music (CCM and secular) and no longer listen

to any remnants of lyrics or sound that portray sensuality, carnality, worldliness, and rebellion. Remember that we will give an account of our lives someday when we stand before the Lord (2 Cor. 5:10).

Jesus said in Luke 9:23:

"If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

Denying ourselves of fleshly and sinful desires is a major part of what it means to follow Christ. This means you must surrender your music and worship to God today and begin to renew your mind regarding a Biblical form of music and worship so that you might know or discern the will of God for your life in this specific area (Rom. 12:1-2).

Every Christian should be willing to bring his experience and life into conformity with the Word of God (Jam. 1:22-23). Your earnest and utmost desire should be to “establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God” (1 Thess. 3:13) and not be overcome by immoral rock rhythms and carnal forms of worship that do not reflect God’s holiness.

Don’t allow yourself to be constantly stretched to follow the reasoning and ploys of the world’s musical system (Tit. 2:12). Beware of the hardening of your spiritual and musical arteries! If you give an inch to Satan, he will take a yard! Don’t allow the devil to get a foothold or base of operation in your life through musical compromise for the Bible warns us: “Neither give place to the devil” (Eph 4:27). If necessary, take back the stolen territory of your heart through confession and repentance for allowing rock music to control your life.

Maybe it’s time for you to make a commitment to God and start on a new journey. You might need to begin or return to a godly, Biblical, musical heritage. Here is a prayer and newfound commitment you can make to reject the deception, authority, and addiction to the “rock beat” and other aspects of musical rebellion in both Contemporary Christian Music and secular rock music.

**“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 participation with the flesh and the world of darkness from which You have delivered me. I no longer want to give place to the Devil. I want to 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 Sacred Music that glorifies You and enhances my spiritual life. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Acknowledgments

Babcock, Wendell. Music on the Rocks, 1975

Baker, Paul. Why Should the Devil Have all the Good Music?, Word Books, 1979

Bachorik, Doug Jr. A Biblical Foundation for Music, Frontline Magazine (White Unto Harvest), pages 6-7, September/October, 2000

Bachorik, Doug Jr. A Biblical Foundation for Music, Frontline Magazine (Music in Perspective), pages 6-7, March/April 2004, Volume 14 #2

Blanchard, John & Lucarini, Dan. Can We Rock the Gospel? Evangelical Press, 2006

Brandenburg, Kent. Sound Music or Sounding brass (The Issue of Biblically Godly Music), 2,000

Cloud, David. Contemporary Christian Music Under the Spotlight, Way of Life Literature, 1998

Coblentz, John. Music in Biblical Perspective, Calvary Publications, 1986

Downey, Paul. Why Cling to a Conservative Music Standard? Frontline Magazine (Music in Perspective), pages 8-9, September/October, 2000

Everson, Ben. Playlist Theology, 2025

Fisher, Tim. What's Next, Christian Crunk?, Frontline Magazine (Music in Perspective), pages 8-9, March/April 2004, Volume 14 #2

Fisher, Tim. The Greatest Threat to Church Music, Frontline Magazine (Christian Music), page 9, September/October 1998, Volume 8 #5

Fisher, Tim. The Battle for Christian Music, Sacred Music Services, 1992

Fisher, Tim. What About Country-Western, Southern Gospel, and Bluegrass Music? Frontline Magazine (Music in Perspective), pages 11-13, September/October, 2000

Garlock, Frank & Kurt Woetzel. Music in the Balance, Majesty Music, 1992

Garlock, Frank. Frontline Magazine (Music in Perspective), The Goal of a Minister of Music, pages 12-13, March/April 2004, Volume 14 #2

Garlock, Frank. The Big Beat (a Rock Blast), Bob Jones Univestiy, 1971

Griffith, Allen. Facing Tough Issues – Godly Music Standards, Biblical Family Ministries, 1997

Gustafson, Dwight. Frontline Magazine (The Christian and the Culture), Biblical Christianity and Popular Culture, pages 15-16, January/February, 1999, volume 9 #1

Kutz, Dean. God's Word, the Final Word On Worship & Music, 2008

Kutz, Dean. Frontline Magazine (Christian Music), Music In Worship, pages 6-8, September/October 1998, Volume 8 #5

Lucarini, Dan. Down the Slippery Slope of Blended Services, A Biblical Foundation for Music, Frontline Magazine (Music in Perspective), pages 10-11, March/April 2004, Volume 14 #2

Lynch, Ken. Gospel Music: Blessing or Blight, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1992

Masters, Peter. Worship in the Melting Pot, The Wakeman Trust, 2002

Miller, Steve. The Contemporary Christian Music Debate (Worldly Compromise or Agent of Renewal), Tyndale House Publishers, 1993

Moss, David. Separating the Sensual From the Spiritual In Our Worship of God, North Hills Bible Church

Pickering, Ernest. The Kind of Music That Honors God, Central Press

Seidel, Leonard. Face the Music (Contemporary Music on Trial), Grace Unlimited Publications, 1988

Smith, Kinberly with Lee Smith. Oh, Be Cageful Little Ears, Winepress Publishing, 1997

Smith, Kimberly. Let Those Who Have Ears to Hear, Winepress Publishing, 2001

Smith, Kimberly. Music and Morals (Dispelling the Myth That Music Is Amoral), Winepress Publishing, 2005

Stephens Kurt. The Goal of a minister of Music, Frontline Magazine (Music in Perspective), pages 12-13, March/April 2004, Volume 14 #2

Stertzbach, Dave. Music In Worship, Frontline Magazine (Christian Music), page 15 September/October 1998, Volume 8 #15

Sweatt, M. Danny. Church Music: Sense and Nonsense, Bob Jones University Press, 1981

Walker, Matthew. Biblical Music (A Patten & Philosophy), Ambassador-Emerald International, Greenville, South Caronia, 2001.

Woetzel, Kurt. Is Music Neutral, An Interview with Robert Shaw, Frontline Magazine (Christian Music), pages 11-12 September/October 1998, Volume 8 #5