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I was approached in Germany this last trip by a young man who told me that he was offended by the fact that I would sing a secular song's melody with the words of my prayer language. His church pastor had taught him that most of the music that the church of today was using was in fact not of God, but of the enemy. This started me thinking of how do we reach the people who are being fed this type of instruction from the pulpit.

The first thing that I did was encourage him to do his own research so that he could make a decision based on the leading of Holy Ghost. The way that I started this was to first of all say that music never belonged to the devil, but he would want people to believe that he is the one who created it. You see, the devil would want people to believe that he is the author because it is a gift that he covets very much.

The devil was at one time, an angel of rank who would present the praise and worship of the angels to God (Ezekiel 28:13-16; Isaiah 14:11-14). Then, the Father would give to Lucifer the blessings for the angels to receive. So early on, Lucifer was made to be the caretaker of sound. This music must have been very powerful as it is one of the instances that caused the angel to be filled with pride, which inevitably caused him to rebel against God for the rule of heaven. I would like to point out here that the devil knows the power of worship, and its importance as it makes an atmosphere for the anointing of God. Isn't it interesting that it is worship, not teaching that creates the invitation for our God to come to be with us?

When the young man was talking to me about how his pastor had convinced him to not listen to secular music and that we should avoid it because it does not honor God, I then proposed the following question to him; "Do the very people that say many types of music are not of God watch television or movies? The reason that I ask this is to myself very clear. If we are to be extreme with sound, we should for sure be extreme with our "eye-gate". Have you ever looked at the roots of Hollywood, which are Druid? Does that mean that the industry is totally evil? No. It is the same with television. The owners of the television stations are not Christian. And if we are watching their stations, then does that mean that we agree with what they believe or hold as truths? It is important to realize that we are in a world that is not operated by Christians. And yet, the bible says very clearly that we are to be the ones who have authority and not those who do not yet know Jesus Christ as their King.

Have you ever considered that if we generalize everything, then we should examine even the automobiles we own. Did you know that the roots of car manufacturing is not bible based? One such corporation actually has Anti-Semitic curses in it because of the belief system of the founder. Yet, we use automobiles. So in truth, I asked the young man to create a balance and ask Holy Ghost to lead him in all truth for this subject.

You see my friends, I want to ask that if we as people of God are going to declare something to stand strong in, we had better make sure that we thoroughly look at every aspect of our lives. So hopefully I have stirred you up to look at this subject of music and see how it works in our lives today from the view of being "Born Again".

Now let's look at this subject of Christians struggling with the question of should we listen to secular music? For sure, the secular world has many musicians that have wonderful talent and listening to the music is entertaining. Each one of us can tell other people of melodies that we have heard which seem to always stay in our minds. There is even music that many people share that some songs have a great message or words. So, to determine if we should or should not listen to secular music, let's look at three main factors to think about:

1. The purpose of music
2. Different styles of music
3. Words or lyrics of music.

### **Number 1 - The Purpose Of Music:**

The question that I would like to initiate with this section is – Should we think that music is just for worship? Or did our God desire that music also have a calming effect or bring entertainment to us?

The most famous musician that we can look at in the bible is King David. He used music mainly for worshipping God as well as in his prayers - (Psalm 4:1 To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm of David. *“Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!”*).

Psalm 61:1 To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. Of David. *“Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer.”*

Psalm 76:1 - To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm of Asaph. A Song. *“In Judah God is known; his name is great in Israel.”*

Psalms 101:1 -A Psalm of David. *“I will sing of steadfast love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will make music.”*

But we also need to be reminded that when King Saul was being tortured by evil spirits, he would call on David to play the stringed instrument in order to bring him peace (I Samuel 16:14-23 *“Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him. 15. And Saul's servants said to him, “Behold now, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. 16. Let our lord now command your servants who are before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre, and when the evil spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will be well.” 17. So Saul said to his servants, “Provide for me a man who can play well and bring him to me.” 18. One of the young men answered, “Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, and the LORD is with him.” 19. Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, “Send me David your son, who is with the sheep.” 20. And Jesse took a donkey laden with bread and a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them by David his son to Saul. 21. And David came to Saul and entered his service. And Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer. 22. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, “Let David remain in my*

*service, for he has found favor in my sight.” 23. And whenever the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him”).*

Now please notice here that the music did not give Saul permanent deliverance from the tormenting spirits. It just soothed him.

The people of Israel used music and its instruments to warn one another of impending danger and of a time to gather together as a strong force (Nehemiah 4:20 – *“In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us”*).

They also used music to surprise their enemies (Judges 7:16-22 – *“And he (Gideon) divided the 300 men into three companies and put trumpets into the hands of all of them and empty jars, with torches inside the jars. 17. And he said to them, “Look at me, and do likewise. When I come to the outskirts of the camp, do as I do. 18. When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then blow the trumpets also on every side of all the camp and shout, ‘For the LORD and for Gideon.’” 19. So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outskirts of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, when they had just set the watch. And they blew the trumpets and smashed the jars that were in their hands. 20. Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the jars. They held in their left hands the torches, and in their right hands the trumpets to blow. And they cried out, “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!” 21. Every man stood in his place around the camp, and all the army ran. They cried out and fled. 22. When they blew the 300 trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his comrade and against all the army. And the army fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, I as far as the border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath”).*

Psalms 49:4

*“I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will solve my riddle to the music of the lyre,”*). This is a use of music to find answers to issues of life.

Music was also used for creating an atmosphere to prophesy - Give me a musician that I may prophesy 2 Kings 3:5 - *“But now bring me a musician.” And when the musician played, the hand of the LORD came upon him.”*

In the New Testament, Paul the apostle instructed the body of Christ to encourage one another with music (Ephesians 5:19 *“addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart,”*).

Colossians 3:16 (*“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God*).

Ephesians 5:19 – (“*..addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart,*”).

Here we read that music can be used for celebrating in the story of the return of the prodigal (Luke 15:25 - “*Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing*”).

With these scriptures that I have listed, we can see that there is a strong emphasis on music being about worship. But again, we need to look at what else the bible says about the uses of music.

## **Number 2 - The Different Styles Of Music:**

Unfortunately, this issue of music and its different styles can and has become divisive among Christians. There are those who believe that there should be no musical instruments at all in the gatherings of the people in church. However, I want to point out that there is a command of the Lord to the Levite priests to play stringed instruments that would prophesy, as well as playing loudly - (I Chronicles 15:16 – “*David also commanded the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their brothers as the singers who should play loudly on musical instruments, on harps and lyres and cymbals, to raise sounds of joy*”).

Also, there is a group in the Christian realm who believe that the only songs to be sung in church are the “Hymns of old”. This is where you will see divisions because while some want the old, there are those who prefer or desire a more modern or contemporary sound in the worship music. And finally, there are those desire and hope that the worship will be in a “Rock Concert” format.

Instead of realizing these styles as personal preferences, some Christians will announce that theirs is the only biblical one and that all other forms of music are ungodly or of the enemy of our souls. And so the war in the church starts up. My one question that I would like to ask those who want to disagree on music and what styles are to be used is, “Where in the bible does it declare that any style or instrument is ungodly?”(Psalm 68:25 – “*the singers in front, the musicians last, between them virgins playing tambourines*”)

Ezra 3:10 – “*And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments came forward with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the directions of David king of Israel*”).

So in looking at this second point, we should come to the conclusion that there is no biblical proclamation to say that any style of music is ungodly or outside of God’s will.

## **Number 3 – Words Or Lyrics Of Music:**

Since the purpose of music (Number 1) and the style of music (Number 2) does not tell us whether a Christian should listen to the music of the secular realm, we must consider strongly the words or lyrics of the music.

Now the scripture that I want to use does not speak directly of music, but I would like to bring to everyone’s attention Philippians 4:8 – “*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is*

*honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”*

If we take this scripture to its heart intent, then we should apply this to the things that we open our minds to. Can the words in a secular song be true, noble, right, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise? If this can be applied to the secular songs that a Christian listens to, then there should not be anything wrong with doing this.

Now as much as I like to listen to many sounds of music and their styles, I will say that much of secular music does not meet the standard of Philippians 4:8.

A Christian must realize that secular music often speaks and even promotes immorality, violence, dishonoring of others, and the breaking of a persons word in contract. If any music opposes God’s heart, word, or commands, a Christian should not listen to it. And yet, I do want to point out that there are many secular songs that make no mention of God and still uphold godly values that speak of purity, integrity, and honesty. For instance, if a song of love promotes a marriage between a husband and wife, or having a pure relationship – and yet does not speak about God or words from the bible - it can be listened to and even enjoyed. The important thing to keep in focus here is that the music will occupy the mind and in allowing this to happen, it will later determine our actions, our temperament, and even our vocabulary. So this is why I wanted to bring into this subject Philippians 4:8.

Obviously the safest kind of music that we should listen to is that which glorifies the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. When it comes to preferring a certain type or style of music, we should realize today that there are many Christian musicians of great talent in these different genres, so we can definitely find something to listen to that would be enjoyable. To summarize this third subject, I would just like to say that if anything leads you to think about or get involved in something that does not give God glory, we should not listen to it.

And finally, I would like to address the term of “rock and roll.” Many people say that the term is not a good one. I started to research this saying and while the term was tagged to music in the 1947, it was borrowed from another time of history. Originally “rock” or “rocking” was a term used by gospel singers in the American south that used to give out the term in giving a decree of spiritual rapture. It was first used in the 1800’s and was a term for giving God a prayer in times of great trial.

So as we say good-bye to 2010, let’s welcome 2011 with music that will give the Lord glory and enjoy the lyrics of life. MERRY CHRISTMAS!

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