



FAMILY STUDY

Where's Our Focus?

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"Where's Our Focus?"

The Purpose of Praise

For most people, the phrase "praise and worship" brings music to mind. For most people, praise music is helpful in focusing their minds on God. However, there are many different types of music, and many opinions and preferences on which type of music is best suited for our worship. Sadly, these differing ideas about music can cause us to focus on the wrong things. Worship, after all, is about falling down before God and praising and glorifying Him. In this Family Study, we will examine the role of music in our worship and our attitudes about it. As you study this concept with your family, we encourage you to consider whether your attitude about worship, and particularly worship music, is focused in the right place. So read on!

Worship Music: Who is it For?

When we sing songs of worship, who are we singing to? The obvious answer, of course, is God. But is that REALLY how you feel? Almost every church has heard people criticize the music. "These hymns are too old fashioned, they're not relevant anymore," or "There's too much of a beat, it isn't worshipful." In reality, these are very self-centered ideas. Too often, we're more concerned with our own entertainment and satisfaction than we are with offering up a sacrifice of praise to God! While hymns may be slower than some people prefer, listen to the words! They're full of great praise and wonderful doctrinal truths. Believe it or not, many of those very 'outdated' hymns were once criticized for being too modern.

And, while time-tested hymns are wonderful, there can also be a place for newer, more contemporary music, provided that it truly glorifies God. The Scriptures often call for us to sing a "new song," and it very well may be that the modern songs of today will be the hymns of tomorrow. There can be a time and place for different styles of music. The important thing about music, whether old-fashioned or newfangled, is to sing the songs as a sacrifice of praise to the Lord our God!

Psalms 96:1-2	Psalms 144:9	Isaiah 42:10	Ephesians 5:19
Psalms 98:1	Psalms 149:1	Romans 15:9	Colossians 3:16

We're the Performers, Not the Audience

Consider this: During musical praise & worship time at church, we are not the audience, there to be entertained. Rather, it is GOD who is the audience, and it is HIS pleasure that we should be seeking. This is not accomplished through a particular style of music, but through a humble and devoted heart, pouring out praises and devotion to Him. Our worship of God is not dependant on a style of music, but on a right attitude in our hearts. If our attitudes are rightly focused on God, we should be able to worship regardless of whether the music is to our liking, and we should have joy in singing praises to God. Beyond this, the Bible requires no particular style of music. Worship that is pleasing to God is worship offered from a genuine, faithful, obedient and reverent heart, no matter how it may sound to us. Consider the numerous passages below that simply call for us to sing:

Exodus 15:1-2, 15:21	Psalms 5:11	Psalms 30:4, 11-12	Psalms 89:1
Judges 5:3	Psalms 7:17	Psalms 33:1-3	Psalms 95:1
2 Samuel 22:49-50	Psalms 9:2, 11	Psalms 59:16-17	Psalms 101:1
1 Chron. 16:9-10, 23-36	Psalms 13:6	Psalms 68:4, 32	Psalms 104:33
2 Chron. 20:21	Psalms 21:13	Psalms 71:22-23	Psalms 146:2

Who's Behind the Music?

While we're on the topic of music, let's remember that there's more to consider than the lyrics and the tune. We must also consider the artists

behind the music. God is not glorified when a music performer offers "worship" songs (or, at least, offers "wholesome" secular songs) while also leading a life that makes no attempt at pleasing God. If an artist lives in constant rebellion, his or her music must be considered in that context. Regardless of the music itself, we must carefully consider whether we want to associate ourselves with the people behind the music. Similar principles are illustrated in the Scriptures below.

Exodus 23:2a	Psalms 1:1	Proverbs 24:1
2 Chronicles 19:2b	Proverbs 13:20	1 Corinthians 15:33

Self-Focus: Singing to Be Noticed

Some of us love to sing at church, and God has gifted some people with a wonderful gift of music. It's great to hear someone using their talents to praise God. However, it becomes a problem when instead of praising God, our singing becomes a performance for others, with a hidden desire that people will be impressed with our talents. It is very easy for a talented person to accept the praise of men instead of giving glory to God. When we seek the reward of earthly praise, that is our only reward. When we give of our talents in worship to God, our reward has a much greater value. God is pleased with us and blesses us and others through our talent.

Psalms 63:7	Psalms 105:2	Galatians 1:10
Psalms 66:2	Matthew 6:5	

Self-Focus: An Unwillingness to Sing

On the other hand, some people do not have a musical talent and don't sing to God, perhaps out of fear that others will critique our praise. Yet once again, the issue here is self-focus. We're more concerned with the approval of men than we are about giving praise to God. The truth, however, is that God doesn't care if we sing well or not; He cares about our giving our hearts to Him.

Psalms 9:1-2	Psalms 108:3	Luke 19:38-40	Hebrews 2:12
Psalms 47:6-7	Psalms 119:172	Galatians 1:10	
Psalms 105:2	Psalms 147:1	Colossians 3:23	

With A Servant's Heart...

Whether we are singing praise to God or ministering to others, we need to maintain a servant's heart at all times. We should not be coming to church with the attitude that we need to be served. When people say that they're not being fed, many times it means that they came expecting a different dish and didn't like what was being served. A true servant comes expecting to serve others and is grateful for what he is served. To be sure, some churches do not serve nutritious messages from God's Word, and in those cases it is important to look elsewhere. However, if your church is doctrinally sound and faithfully preaches God's Word, don't let dissatisfaction with the music alone drive you away. Instead, ask yourself, "Am I willing to serve God with the music anyway?"

Mark 9:35	Romans 12:3	Philippians 2:5
Luke 17:10	1 Cor. 15:58	

To Sum it Up

The reason we sing songs of praise is to glorify and honor God. God is the audience we are singing to. The style of music shouldn't be important. Whoever is listening shouldn't be important. Our singing ability shouldn't be important. The enemy will use all these distractions to keep your focus off of the Lord. If you determine to keep that focus in the right place and sing to God and God alone, you will find yourself enjoying the music and not caring who else is listening. This is a time of fellowship between you and your Savior. Keep the attitude of a servant and come to Him in humble adoration. Keep your focus on God, and praise Him for His glory!