

## **Worship in Song Ephesians 5:17-21**

**Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.**

God desires our worship in song to \_\_\_\_\_ Him in spirit and in truth. How we worship God in song matters to God, and it should matter to us. God's Word is a \_\_\_\_\_ to our paths and a \_\_\_\_\_ to our feet (Psalm 119 :105). We go to God's Word as the authority for all that we do.

I love to sing hymns. I cannot remember a time when singing hymns was not a \_\_\_\_\_ of my life. Jackie and I had the song "Be With Me, Lord" sung at our wedding, only we \_\_\_\_\_ the words to "Be with Us, Lord." Jackie and I sang spiritual songs with our four children because we wanted to instill in our daughters the \_\_\_\_\_ that we had for God. Our girls are old enough to sing hymns and spiritual songs with their children. Some of the happiest moments of our lives have been spent worshipping God in song.

Hymns and spiritual songs \_\_\_\_\_ God, they \_\_\_\_\_ valuable lessons; and they stir the heart. Singing involves the \_\_\_\_\_ person: the heart, the mind, the voice, and the lips. Songs send a \_\_\_\_\_ of love, thanksgiving, and adoration. By singing, we praise God and build up one another. The Lord \_\_\_\_\_ us greatly when He instructed us to sing from our hearts.

The music of the church provides a great blessing, but it also has \_\_\_\_\_. Many focus on the music they \_\_\_\_\_ and lose sight of what God desires or requires. Others go far \_\_\_\_\_ what the Lord asks. Since the Lord seeks those who worship Him in spirit and in truth, we must ask what the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord is. What is the Lord's \_\_\_\_\_ for us to worship Him in song?

### **Our reading today comes from the book of Ephesians 5:17-21.**

To learn the \_\_\_\_\_ about Christian worship in song we must go to the New Testament. So let's review the relevant passages pertaining to musical worship among Christians. The first mention of singing a hymn in the New Testament is found in both Matthew 26:30 and Mark 14:26. The Lord had just instituted the Lord's Supper; "After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

In the book of Acts 6:25, Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into \_\_\_\_\_ and they had their feet in the stocks for healing a servant girl. The Bible says, "But about \_\_\_\_\_ Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them." These are simple statements about Christians singing.

In Romans 15:9, Paul speaks of the Gentiles glorifying God; as it is written, "Therefore I will give \_\_\_\_\_ to thee among the gentiles, and I will \_\_\_\_\_ to thy name." This emphasizes how a congregation in one accord and with one \_\_\_\_\_ should glorify God (Romans 15:6).

In 1 Corinthians 14, there are two references to singing. Verse 15 says, "I shall sing with the \_\_\_\_\_ and I shall sing with the \_\_\_\_\_ also." The emphasis in singing is on the spirit and the mind. Verse 26 says, "What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for \_\_\_\_\_." The early church edified each other by teaching songs and singing them.

Ephesians 5:18-19 says, "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with

the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making \_\_\_\_\_ with your heart to the Lord.” The emphasis in this passage is on speaking to one another and in making melody with the heart to the Lord. The idea of having \_\_\_\_\_ or of playing instruments of music in worship is absent in these passages. There were no choirs, because \_\_\_\_\_ was to sing.

Colossians 3:16 says, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all \_\_\_\_\_ teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” The emphasis again is on singing \_\_\_\_\_ that teach and admonish. These are activities that \_\_\_\_\_ the heart, the mind, and the lips.

The writer of the book of Hebrews twice mentions praising God in song. First, in Hebrews 2:12 which quotes from Psalm 22:22, “I will proclaim Thy name to my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will sing Thy praise.” Again, the idea is \_\_\_\_\_, proclaiming and singing. Second, Hebrews 13:15 says, “Through Him (that is, through Jesus) then, let us continually offer up a \_\_\_\_\_ of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.” The last mention of Christian worship in song is found in James 5:13, which says, “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises.”

In \_\_\_\_\_ instance, the music described in Christian worship emphasizes verbal communication: singing, speaking, teaching, admonishing, making melody in your hearts, confessing, giving thanks, proclaiming, and the fruit of lips. The clear instruction of the New Testament is that we should sing from our \_\_\_\_\_ praise to God. Instruments of music cannot speak, teach, admonish, give thanks, praise, proclaim, confess, or make melody in your heart. Instruments of music \_\_\_\_\_ to do any of what is in God’s instructions. They are additions that go beyond the instructions of the New Testament.

The fact that there is no reference in the New Testament to the use of instrumental music in Christian worship is startling! Neither Jesus nor the apostles \_\_\_\_\_ them. The New Testament gives no \_\_\_\_\_ of churches using them in worship. God desires singing from the heart, but He is \_\_\_\_\_ about using instruments.

Most people think churches have \_\_\_\_\_ used instruments of music in worship. They’re surprised that some churches don’t use instruments, and they think it’s \_\_\_\_\_. The early church, however, didn’t use instruments; and some churches, like the Orthodox churches, have \_\_\_\_\_ used instruments. The word a cappella is a reference to singing unaccompanied and means “in the manner of the \_\_\_\_\_.”

Early Christians actually \_\_\_\_\_ instrumental music in worship. For several centuries, they strongly \_\_\_\_\_ using instruments. Not until the thirteenth century did churches widely begin using the instruments. Both Jews and Greeks used instruments in their worship. Converts to Christianity knew this, but they still sang unaccompanied. They consciously said no, because they had no God-given \_\_\_\_\_ to use them.

### **Read what Dr. Everett Ferguson said.**

As late as 1250 AD, Thomas Aquinas said, “Our church does not use instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God that she may not seem to Judaize.” He understood that harps were for \_\_\_\_\_, not for Christians. Instruments of music came along as an innovation brought in because people \_\_\_\_\_ them, not because the New Testament gave instructions for them.

God has revealed His will in His Word. The Lord promised the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into \_\_\_\_\_ the truth in John 16:13. “All the truth” means the New Testament teaches us \_\_\_\_\_ that God wanted us to know to have eternal life and to live the Christian life. Nothing is missing. We shouldn’t imagine that God has \_\_\_\_\_ something. When God revealed all the truth, He did not need to say \_\_\_\_\_. To think we need more and to introduce new practices \_\_\_\_\_ that we have all the truth. When we aren’t content with God’s teaching but go beyond that teaching, we’re actually showing \_\_\_\_\_ to God. Starting new practices, going beyond God’s teaching, is presumptuous. It fails to \_\_\_\_\_ to God and it builds on sand.

The Lord said, “If you abide in my word, then you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you \_\_\_\_\_” (John 8:31-32). Christ here reveals the mark of a true disciple; a true disciple \_\_\_\_\_ in His Word. He doesn’t add to it, take away from it, reinvent it, or change it. He stays in the boundaries of the teaching and instructions of the Word. The person who stays with the word will \_\_\_\_\_ the truth, and the truth will set him free. When you leave the Word or you tamper with the truth, you end up with man-made \_\_\_\_\_.

Someone says “Phil, don’t you know that David played the \_\_\_\_\_?” Yes, I’m aware of passages like Psalm 150 and 2 Chronicles 29:25. I also know that David lived a thousand years \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Christ. David was not a Christian, and we’re exploring how Christians worshiped, not how the Israelites of old worshiped. We don’t offer \_\_\_\_\_ sacrifices as David did. David lived under the \_\_\_\_\_ covenant, while we live under the \_\_\_\_\_ covenant. In 2 Chronicles 29:25, God approved of harps in the worship of the temple under the old covenant; but the New Testament \_\_\_\_\_ speaks of the use of instruments of music in Christian worship.

Some say that the word “psalm” and the Greek word psallo, used in Ephesians 5:19 for “making music in the heart,” permits us to \_\_\_\_\_ instruments. While it is true that many years before the New Testament, the Greek word psallo meant to pluck on a string or play a harp; however the word \_\_\_\_\_ in meaning over time. Someone says how did this happen? The Jews sang psalms with instruments in the Temple, but sang without them \_\_\_\_\_ the temple. Musical worship in the temple was \_\_\_\_\_ to the Levites who had choirs with many instruments, but the worship outside had no musical instruments. Jews regularly sang psalms for hundreds of years \_\_\_\_\_ any use of the harp. They chanted psalms and many of their daily prayers without any instrument at all.

So when the Jews used the word psallo or the word psalm, they normally thought of \_\_\_\_\_ the words of the song unaccompanied. It never occurred to early Christians, who know Greek better than we do, that the words psallo or psalms \_\_\_\_\_ that we should or could use instruments in worship. If those words had pointed to instruments, why didn’t the \_\_\_\_\_ church use them? Why did they \_\_\_\_\_ them? Why did it take many centuries before someone started using them?

Others ask, “Phil, aren’t people playing harps in \_\_\_\_\_?” Yes, John’s visions found in the highly \_\_\_\_\_ book of Revelation speaks of harps in heaven. Saints in heaven also wear \_\_\_\_\_ and cast them before the throne of God. Angels and people in heaven say many things in heaven that Christians are not \_\_\_\_\_ to say on earth (2 Corinthians 12:4). Heaven and earth are very \_\_\_\_\_. Let’s ask “What does God want us, on \_\_\_\_\_, to do?” Our task is not to imitate what’s done in heaven, but to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus and His teachings in the New Testament. If harps in heaven \_\_\_\_\_ the church ought to play harps, why didn’t the apostles and the early church

understand that they were supposed to play them? Why did they refuse to play them for centuries?

Someone says, “Well, Phil, that’s just your tradition.” The word tradition speaks of what has been \_\_\_\_\_ from an authority. We have an authority in Scripture for singing. It’s the use of instruments that is of \_\_\_\_\_ origin.

Someone says, “Well, the Bible doesn’t \_\_\_\_\_ playing an organ!” That’s true; it doesn’t say that particular phrase. But neither does the Bible \_\_\_\_\_ condemn burning incense, or praying to saints, or using roast lamb in the Lord’s Supper, or offering animal sacrifices, or substituting sprinkling for immersion in baptism, or baptizing infants. Just because the Bible doesn’t specifically condemn something doesn’t mean that God \_\_\_\_\_ of it. These things, like using an instrument of music in worship, come not from God but from \_\_\_\_\_. The right question is not “Where does the Bible condemn an instrument in worship?” but rather the question should be, “Where does the New Testament \_\_\_\_\_ us to use instruments of music in Christian worship?” To act without God’s instruction, is presumptuous; it’s building on \_\_\_\_\_.

If the Bible were to include everything that God condemned, it would surely be too \_\_\_\_\_ to carry. The Lord has chosen to instruct us in \_\_\_\_\_ terms what His will is for our lives and our worship. He has shown us the way, which rules out \_\_\_\_\_ other ways. There is only “one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5); and that means that there cannot be other approved baptisms. The Bible says there is only “one gospel” in Galatians 1:6-9 and so that condemns any other gospel. The Bible says there is “one body” (or church, Ephesians 4:4; 1:22-23). That means there cannot be other approved churches.

The specific instruction to sing means one should sing. There is no authority to \_\_\_\_\_ other forms of music. When God instructs us through His Word, He tells us what He \_\_\_\_\_ us to know. We shouldn’t expect God to exclude all other possibilities with a \_\_\_\_\_ of “don’ts.”

If I went to a restaurant and I ordered fried chicken and mashed potatoes, I’d \_\_\_\_\_ the waitress to bring just what I ordered. If she brought me liver and onions, I’d say to her, “This is not what I ordered; I ordered fried chicken and mashed potatoes.” Telling her what I want specifically \_\_\_\_\_ everything else. Wouldn’t it be ridiculous if I had to go down the whole \_\_\_\_\_ and tell her everything I don’t want? We need to hear and do what God says.

**Read the story the Lord told at the end of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:24-27.**

Wisdom is hearing God’s Word and doing it. Foolishness is hearing God’s Word but doing something else that you want to do. I can read clearly in the New Testament the Lord’s instructions about singing in worship. Not one word of the New Testament is said about using instruments of music in Christian worship. They weren’t used in any church for hundreds of years. Let’s put singing in worship on one side and singing with instruments on the other. They’re different, aren’t they? Let me ask you this question. Which one is \_\_\_\_\_ and follows the Lord’s teaching and which one is foolish by failing to do what God teaches? Which does the Lord’s will and which is an innovation of man?

In the same way, we should come to God in faith and obedience. If there is sin in your life and you are not yet a child of God, a Christian, why not become one today. You can do so by believing Jesus is the Christ, by repenting of your sins, by confessing Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and by being baptized in water for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). That’s how people became Christians according to the Scriptures, and how you can become one, too. Be wise and follow what the Lord teaches. You’ll never regret doing the right thing.