

Ephesians Series

Lesson #240

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Dean Bible Ministries

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The Biblical Culture of Worship

Ephesians 5:18–21; Colossians 3:16



EPHESIANS

THE WEALTH, WALK
& WARFARE
OF THE BELIEVER

What are Our Assumptions?

Summary:

- **The Scripture is our sole authority on worship.**
- **God and God alone defines worship.**
- **But how do we evaluate music? Is that not a matter of personal taste? Or culture? (Subtext: good and bad music, art, literature, poetry, etc. are relative to culture and personal taste.) Is this true?**

**What the Bible Teaches
About**

**The Immensity
of God**



What the Bible Teaches About

The Holiness of God



**What the Bible Teaches
About**

The Meaning of Worship



Common assumptions which govern contemporary understanding of music in the church:

- **that the music should be attractive to the visitors.**
- **that “new song” means to consistently have music that is recent and contemporary.**
- **that the criteria for evaluating worship is what it does to us on the inside, how it makes me feel, and that it should be uplifting and positive.**

What We Have Learned

- 1. Eph. 5:18/Col. 3:16 both list hymn singing *first* in the list of results of a life filled with the Word of God by means of the Holy Spirit.**
- 2. One primary purpose of hymn singing is to teach one another and admonish/correct one another.**
- 3. Other purposes:**
 - to express our joy for God's work in our lives (defense, Psa. 5:11, 63:7; His grace to us, Psa. 13:6, 59:16; remembering His works, Psa. 30:4)**
 - to declare His name among His people, Psa. 9:11**
 - to remind us of what God has done for us and challenge us to live in light of His purposes and grace.**

What We Have Learned

- 4. Singing is not about evangelism, making non-Christians comfortable, attracting people to a local church.**
- 5. Singing is not about how it makes us feel, but about describing and declaring who God is and what He has done.**
- 6. Hymns, both music and words, must be evaluated according to some standard.**

But because we are free consumers of cultural commodities—because the system of popular culture neither establishes canons nor conveys taboos—we can choose whatever truth we want. Living within the system of popular culture, we find it more plausible that truth about the nature of things is private, not public, and ultimately purely subjective.

Ken Myers

All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians and Popular Culture

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- 6. Hymns, both music and words, must be evaluated according to some standard.**
- 7. The music should support lyrics that help us transcend the here and now to focus on the eternal, transcendent, unchanging, eternal God.**

**What the Bible Teaches
About**

Worldview and Beauty



From what source do our ideas of beauty derive?

Are there external, objective standards for beauty, for “good” art, “bad” art; “good” music, “bad” music?

CULTURE

“We live in complex patterns of need, of opportunity, and of sin, and the inference we really ought to draw from Scripture is often the most difficult to see, because of the complexity and sin in our lives. This is why we need teachers and the fellowship of the saints.”

~Myers, Ken. *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians and Popular Culture* (p. 53). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

CULTURE

“What sort of being is a culture? It’s not a person. It’s not even an institution, like the church or the state or the family. It is instead a dynamic pattern, an ever-changing matrix of objects, artifacts, sounds, institutions, philosophies, fashions, enthusiasms, myths, prejudices, relationships, attitudes, tastes, rituals, habits, colors, and loves, all embodied in individual people, in groups and collectives and associations of people (many of whom do not know they are associated), in books, in buildings, in the use of time and space, in wars, in jokes, and in food.”

~Myers, Ken. *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians and Popular Culture* (p. 53). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

GOD CREATOR

TRUTH, BEAUTY
resides in the
thinking of God

God speaks to
everything He
creates or He
speaks to nothing
He creates.

FINITE UNIVERSE

Matter/Energy

Light

Vegetation

Animals

Man

[who he is;

Purpose

Social

(Marriage, Family,

Law, Politics)

Ethics

Aesthetics

(Art, Music, Literature)]

1. The Bible says a lot about “beauty.”

שְׁבִי (šĕbî, “ornament”), beauty in the sense of the ornamentation that makes something beautiful (e.g., Isa. 4:2).

טוֹב (tôb, “good”), occasionally used to describe physical beauty, usually in phrases like “good (tôb) of appearance.”

תִּפְאָרָה (tip̄ārâ), to beautify, glorify.

Words expressing Aesthetic excellence:

- **Glorious**
- **Magnificent**
- **Majestic**
- **Splendid**
- **Beautiful**
- **Excellent**

Defining terms:

Popular Culture, Traditional Culture, High Culture

High culture: characterized by choices which emphasize the transcendent, multigenerational, significant, communal, and less accessible.

The need for music appreciation lessons.

Myth and religion are common themes.

*~Gordon, T. David. *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture Rewrote the Hymnal*. Kindle Edition.*

Contrasting Popular Culture Values vs. Values of Traditional and High Culture

Popular Culture	Traditional and High Culture
Focuses on the new	Focuses on the timeless
Discourages reflection	Encourages reflection
Pursued casually “to kill time”	Pursued with deliberation, thought, intentionality
Gives us what we want, tells us what we already know	Offers us what we could not have imagined
Relies on instant accessibility; encourages impatience	Requires training; encourages patience
Emphasizes information and trivia	Emphasizes knowledge and wisdom
Encourages quantitative concerns	Encourages qualitative concerns
Celebrates fame	Celebrates ability
Appeals to sentimentality	Appeals to appropriate proportioned emotions
Content and form governed by requirements of the market	Content and form governed by requirements of created order

~Kenneth Myers. *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians and Popular Culture* Wheaton: Crossway, 1989

Php. 4:8, “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Php. 4:9, “The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”

true, noble (honorable), just, pure, lovely, good report (commendable), virtue (moral excellence), praiseworthy

Folk culture

also “transcendent, multigenerational, significant, communal, yet more accessible than classical/high culture. ... folk culture shares many of its qualities.”

Contrasting Popular Culture Values vs. Values of Traditional and High Culture

Popular Culture	Traditional and High Culture
Formulas are the substance	Formulas are the tools
Relies on spectacle, tending to violence and prurience	Relies on formal dynamics and the power of symbols (including language)
Aesthetic power in reminding of something else	Aesthetic power in intrinsic attributes
Individualistic	Communal
Leaves us where it found us	Transforms our sensibilities
Incapable of deep or sustained attention	Capable of repeated, careful attention
Lacks ambiguity	Allusive, suggests the transcendent
Reflects the desires of the self	Encourages understanding of others
Tends toward relativism	Tends toward submission to standards

John 17:13, “But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

John 17:14, “I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

John 17:15, “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

John 17:16, “They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

John 17:17, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”