

# Why Do We Sing in Worship?

## Ephesians 5:19

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### WHY DO WE SING IN WORSHIP TO GOD?

- A. The act of singing is an important part of worshipping God.
1. At least one thousand times each year we participate in the singing of a Christian hymn.
  2. The word “sing” in one of its forms, appears approximately 150 times in the Bible.
- B. Purposes of Singing:
1. Singing is a means of teaching.
  2. Singing is a means of encouragement or admonition.
  3. Singing is a means of expressing joy.
  4. Singing is a means of glorifying God.
  5. Singing is a means of expressing thanksgiving to God.
  6. Singing is a means of communion with God.
  7. Singing is a means of obeying the Scriptures.
  7. On funeral occasions . . . It is a means of expressing sympathy.
- C. Nine New Testament passages speak of singing.
1. **Matthew 26:30** – “And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”
  2. **Acts 16:25** – “But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.”
  3. **Romans 15:9** – “And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: ‘For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name.’”
  4. **1 Corinthians 14:15** – “What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.”
  5. **Ephesians 5:19** – “Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”
    - a. Sing to one another in:
      1. **Psalms**: The Psalms of David were sung by the Jews at the temple as well as by early Christians.
      2. **Hymn**: A song or ode in honor to God.
      3. **Spiritual Songs**: Odes or songs relating to spiritual things.
      4. Melody for these “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” is assigned a source . . . The hear God has created.
        - a. Melody is to be made by those singing.
        - b. The Bible tells us where the melody is to be made.

- c. The Bible tells us that the instrument is the heart and the melody is to be made there.
  - 1. Melody is to be made by that which God made.
  - 2. Mechanical instruments are made by man.
- 6. **Colossians 3:16** – “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”
- 7. **Hebrews 2:12** – “. . . I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.”
- 8. **James 5:13** – “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.”
- 9. **Hebrews 13:15** – “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.”
- D. Every Christian should sing in worship.
  - 1. Sing your best . . . It is for God.
  - 2. Sing only that which is Biblically true.
  - 3. Concentrate on and understand the words and thoughts you are singing.

## **WHY DO WE NOT USE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN OUR WORSHIP TO GOD?**

- A. The question is often raised, “Why doesn’t the Church of Christ not use mechanical instruments of music in their worship services?”
- B. Basically there are four reasons.
  - 1. There is no command to use it.
  - 2. There is no example of it in Christian worship when the church was first established and for centuries thereafter.
  - 3. The word of history is unanimous that musical instruments were not used in Christian worship during the period of direct divine direction of the church.
  - 4. Bible scholars of all ages and from different religious groups have believed it to be out of harmony with the Scriptures and have so expressed it.
- C. We have noted and read all nine verses in the New Testament that has to do with singing.
- D. **QUESTION: Does such a “little thing” like a piano, organ, guitar, drums, etc. really matter to God?** This is indeed a significant question that deserves a Biblical answer.
  - 1. In three strategic places (Near the beginning of the Bible . . . Near the middle of the Bible . . . And near the end of the Bible) God warns the ages about tampering with His commandments.
    - a. **Deuteronomy 4:2** – “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.”

- b. **Proverbs 30:6** – “Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.”
  - c. **Revelation 22:18-19** – “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;  
19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book”
2. As we further answer our question, “Does such a ‘little thing’ like a piano, organ, guitar, drums, etc. really matter to God?, let us note from the Bible...
- a. In Numbers 3:14, the “little matter” of fire from an unauthorized source condemned two nephews of Moses, Nadab and Abihu. Fire from Heaven came down and devoured them.
  - b. In 1 Samuel 13:13-14, the “little matter” of a few sheep and good intentions condemned King Saul in the matter concerning God’s command for him to utterly destroy all of the Amalekites. He was rejected from being King over Israel.
  - d. In **Matthew 15:9**, the “little matter” of adding tradition to worship condemned the Pharisees. “And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”
  - e. **2 John 9** – “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.”
- E. **QUESTION:** Hasn’t there always been instrumental music in the churches?
- 1. The answer is no!
    - a. According to *The American Encyclopedia*, vol. 12, p. 688, in the first apostate church, Pope Vitalian is believed to have introduced the use of an organ into the churches of Western Europe somewhere around 670.
    - b. It is significant that there were no instruments used in worship for over 650 years after the church was established and its introduction caused great turmoil.
    - c. In the minds of early Christians instrumental music was associated with paganism.
  - 2. Mechanical instruments of music are made by the hands of men. The heart is made by God. **Ephesians 5:19** – ““Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and MAKING MELODY IN YOUR HEART to the Lord.”
- F. Early religious leaders condemned instrumental music in worship.
- 1. **John Wesley** . . . Methodist . . . “I have no objection to the organ in our chapels provided it is neither seen nor heard.”

2. **John Calvin** . . . Presbyterian . . . “Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, and the restoration of other shadows of the law.”
  3. **Joseph Bingham** . . . Church of England . . . “Music in the church is as ancient as the apostles; but instrumental music is not.”
  4. **Adam Clarke** . . . Methodist . . . writing on page 686 in Vol. 4 of *Clark’s Commentary*, said: I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them (musical instruments) productive of any good in the worship of God; and have had no reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music as a science I esteem and admire, but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor.”
  5. **Charles Spurgeon** . . . Baptist . . . “I would as soon attempt to pray to God with machinery as to sing to Him with machinery.”
  5. **Martin Luther** . . . Lutheran . . . Called the organ an “ensign of Baal.”
- G. The early church used only vocal music.
1. **Dr. Curt Sachs**, Columbia University, and one of the most eminent musicologists of our time, said: “All ancient Christian music was vocal.”
  2. **Richard Wagner**, quoted in the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol 10, said: “There is no doubt but that those qualities absolutely necessary to church music, namely, modesty, dignity, and soulfulness, are most inherent in the vocal style than in any other. Reserve and humble restraint befits the house of God . . . That vocal music is in general more expressive than the mechanically produced tones of instruments is undeniable. Religious feeling finds its most natural expression in vocal utterance for the human heart is the source of both devotion and song.”
  3. **Lyman Coleman**, writing on pages 370 and 371 of the book, *The Primitive Church*, said: “Both the Jews in their temple service and the Greeks in their idol worship were accustomed to singing with the accompaniment of instrumental music. The converts to Christianity must have been familiar with this mode of singing, but it is generally admitted that the primitive Christians employed no instrumental music in their religious worship. Neither Ambrose or Basil, nor Chrysostom in their noble encomiums which they severally pronounce upon music make any mention of instrumental music. Basil condemns it as ministering only to the depraved passions of men.”
  4. **J. N. Brown**, on page 1702 of Vol. 2 of *The Shaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, said: In the Greek church the organ never came into use, but after the eighth century it became common in the Latin church, not, however, without opposition from the side of the Monks . . . The reformed church discarded it, and in other places admitted only sparingly and after long hesitation.”

- I. Arguments made in defense of the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship services.
1. **“I don’t see any harm in it.” . . . “I don’t see anything wrong with it.”**
    - a. This is viewing the issue from a natural viewpoint, and not from the Biblical standpoint. Spiritual things must be judged by the spiritual standard of the Bible.
    - b. There is harm in it.
      1. It has divided the religious world.
      2. It has caused trouble in nearly every religious group.
      3. It discourages congregational singing.
      4. It makes worship vain. **Matthew 15:9** – “. . . **“And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”**
  2. **“The Bible doesn’t say not to use them.”**
    - a. Such adherents overlook God’s Law of Exclusion in the Bible. That is . . . When God says something a certain way, it excludes everything else.
    - b. Examples:
      1. Ark of gopher wood. Not elm . . . Not oak . . . Not cedar.
      2. Fruit of the vine. Not coffee . . . Not milk . . . Not Pepsie Cola
      3. Making melody in your heart . . . Not on a piano . . . Not on an organ . . . etc.
    - c. **Romans 10:17** – “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”
  3. **“I like it and it sounds good.”**
    - a. In the worship service, whom are we trying to please . . . God . . . or ourselves?
    - b. Just because people do a thing doesn’t make it acceptable to God.
      1. This is vain worship. **Matthew 15:9**
      2. In our worship services we are striving to please God in rather than men.
      3. Music here is worship . . . not an art.
      4. It is not what pleases us but rather what pleases God that counts.
  4. **“It was used in the Old Testament.”**
    - a. The question is often asked, ‘Were musical instruments used in the Old Testament?’ The proper Biblical answer is yes, they were used in the Old Testament.
      1. The word “music” appears 17 times in the Old Testament.
      2. The word “instruments” appears 45 times in the Old Testament.
      3. The term, “stringed instruments” appear some 25 times in the Old Testament.
      4. The word “cymbals” appears some 16 times in the Old Testament.
      5. The words “harp” or “harps” appears some 49 times in the Old



- b. Listening friends, we should interpret Ephesians 5:19 as Paul and the early Christians practiced it . . . And sing using our voices as the church in the 1<sup>st</sup> century did by God’s commands.

**CONCLUSION:**

- A. **Listening friends, we have scriptural reasons for NOT using it . . . Denominations only have human reasons FOR using it.**
- B. Let us worship God as He has so directed . . . Not adding anything He did not include . . . And not omitting anything that He did include.
- C. **God’s Plan for Man’s Salvation**