

Music in the Home: Music's Boundaries

I Cor. 14:40, “Let all things be done decently and in order.”

Some people complain about America's highway laws, but after traveling overseas to various countries, I am very grateful for our order. You might see people overseas avoid the heavy traffic by driving on the sidewalks or motorbikes and bicycles squeeze tightly through each other with no consequence. I've been in the taxis of Peru where some drive up a hill, turn off the engine with the taxi in neutral, and speedily coast downhill through crosswalks and cross streets just to save a little fuel. :) There is a reason for speed limits, safety belts, etc... in America. The rules bring order.

Our God is a God of order, and He expects order in everything we do including music. Like our highway system, in order to have order, one must have rules and boundaries. God's music has boundaries, and following these boundaries protect God's children from being deceived by the devil's music. So what are some of these boundaries?

Ephesus 5:19 addresses music and states, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;” Here are the four boundaries to music I see here in Eph. 5:19:

- **Speech** “Speaking to yourselves” Not every song has words, but many songs do. What are the words in your music? We already learned in the article “Music is not Amoral” that every word is judged by God. What words should be in music? Eph. 5:19 says, “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...” Spiritual songs is translated from a word meaning “ode”. Odes were speeches or sermons. Music shouldn't just be the same 3 words over and over again: “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus”. Good music has depth and compels you live for Jesus just like a sermon from a preacher. Col. 3:16 adds more to this area of speech in music: “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.” Are the words in your songs full of “the word of Christ” and do they teach and admonish you to do right?
- **Singers** “...be filled with the Spirit” Eph. 5:19, is only part of a longer sentence which starts in verse 18. “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;” We learn from passages like Pro. 4:23 and Lk. 6:45 that whatever is allowed into our hearts comes out. Who we are and what we produce comes from what we have in our hearts. The singers and performers of the music you enjoy must “be filled with the Spirit” otherwise they won't produce Spirit-filled music. There really is no way around this. You must be very sure that the music you listen to is from godly believers.
- **Style** “...singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” Every musician has a style. And every style either pleases God or please the flesh. The style

either glorifies the performer or it glorifies God. Eph. 5:19 requires your music to be sung “to the Lord”. Is the music you are listening to being sung for financial profit, self, or God's glory? How can you tell? How do the performers dress? Do they dress like the world and talk like the world with the men having long hair, tattoos, and earrings and with the women wearing low necklines and skin-tight outfits? Then they are of the world, not God. When they sing, do they scoop their notes, sing huskily and sensually into the microphone, and show off by twirling and whirling their notes or instrumental playing? Then they are performing for self. If the style is to please God, the singer will make sure every word is clearly defined and their voice will just simply try to sing the written notes.

- **Structure** “singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” We will study the structure of music more fully in future articles so don't turn me off yet :), but for now, notice that Eph. 5:19 emphasizes the melody to be sung. To God, melody is what makes a song music. Today in our fallen culture, man thinks that rhythm is what makes a song. However, God's music is melody. Is your music melody or rhythm? Is there a rock-beat (soft or heavy, it doesn't matter) in your music? If so, your music is rhythm. God commands melody not rhythm to be sung.

These four truths are the boundaries to music as laid out in Eph. 5:19. If the reader follows these four boundaries closely, you will easily be able to eliminate Satan's music from your life and know assuredly what is God's music.