

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs (Colossians 3:16)

1. The Command and Its Meaning

Text: Colossians 3:16

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly... teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...”

Key Idea:

Music is not entertainment first—it is **instruction, exhortation, and worship**.

Three Categories:

- **Psalms** – Scripture-based songs (often directly from the Psalter)
 - Gregorian Chants of the Middle Ages
- **Hymns** – Doctrinal songs about God (structured, theological)
- **Spiritual Songs** – (One answer) Testimony, Christian Experience, and devotional songs

Other definitions: any music that reminds you of God and spiritual things

Some include **military march music: John Philip Susa,**

“This Land is Your Land” by Woody Guthrie

Some include the music of Bach, Handel, Haydn, and some of Brahms’ music

Bach wrote at the title of his works “For the Glory of God” at the bottom “In the Name of Jesus Christ”

Handel produce a work titled “The Messiah” which is composed of scripture in its entirety.

Haydn produced a work titled “The Creation” in German and English

They produced "pure" music means their works focus on formal clarity, absolute structural integrity, and intrinsic musical logic rather than programmatic storytelling or emotional excess. It highlights structural perfection, clean craftsmanship, and self-contained design.

It was crafted for the “Glory of God”

2. The Origin of Music in Scripture

Where wast thou when I laid **the foundations of the earth?** declare, if thou hast understanding. (Job 38:4 KJV)

When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:7 KJV)

Genesis 4:21 – Jubal

“He was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.”

Teaching Points:

- Music is **ancient and part of human culture from early Genesis**
- Jubal represents the **development of musical skill and instruments**
- Music itself is **morally neutral**, but powerful

¹⁵ Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden?

¹⁶ Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood:

¹⁷ Which said unto God, **Depart from us**: and what can the Almighty do for them?

¹⁸ Yet he filled their houses with good *things*: but the counsel of the wicked is far from me. (Job 22:15-18 KJV)

¹² They take the timbrel and harp, and **rejoice at the sound of the organ**.

¹³ They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.¹

¹⁴ Therefore they say unto God, **Depart from us**; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

¹⁵ What *is* the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?

(Job 21:12-15 KJV)

Sounds like Pharaoh:

And Pharaoh said, Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go. (Exod. 5:2 KJV)

3. Music and the Spiritual Realm

1 Samuel 16:16, 23 – David and Saul

David played, and the evil spirit departed from Saul.

Let our lord now command thy servants, *which are* before thee, to seek out a man, *who is* a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, **when the evil spirit from God** is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. (1 Sam. 16:16 KJV)

And it came to pass, when the *evil* spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and **the evil spirit departed from him**. (1 Sam. 16:23 KJV)

Teaching Points:

- Music has **real spiritual influence**
- It can **soothe, calm, and influence the inner man**
- God uses music as a **means of grace and relief**
- The music itself is not magical
- It is **God working through music**

4. A Brief Music Appreciation Segment (Christian Heritage)

Johann Sebastian Bach

- Wrote music “**Soli Deo Gloria**” (to the glory of God alone)
- Deeply theological (e.g., Passions, Cantatas)
- His music reflects **order, structure, and reverence**

George Frideric Handel

- Composer of *Messiah*
- Scripture set to music
- “Hallelujah Chorus” rooted in Revelation

Joseph Haydn

- Wrote *The Creation*
- Expressed joy and wonder at God’s creation
- More classical style, but still God-centered themes

Teaching Emphasis:

These men show that:

- Music can be **intellectually rich and spiritually meaningful**
- Excellence in music can **honor God**

4. Psalmody in Reformed Churches

What is Psalmody?

- Singing **only the Psalms** (often without instruments)

Why they do it:

- Desire for **biblical purity in worship**
- Concern about **human-composed lyrics introducing error**

A Fair and Balanced Explanation:

- We Affirm: Psalms are **inspired and foundational**
- Note: Colossians 3:16 includes **hymns and spiritual songs also**

5. Churches That Use No Instruments

Examples:

- Some **Primitive Baptists**
- **Churches of Christ**

Their reasoning:

- New Testament does not explicitly command instruments
- Emphasis on **a cappella singing**

Teaching Balance:

- Instruments are:
 - Present in Old Testament worship (Psalms 150)
 - Not forbidden in the New Testament
- The key issue is not instruments vs. no instruments, but:
- **Is Christ honored? Is truth communicated?**

6. Practical Application

- Does the music I listen to:
 - Teach truth?
 - Stir godly affections?
 - Honor Christ?

Challenge:

- Fill your life with music that helps:
 - **Truth dwell richly**

- **Your heart worship rightly**
- **Your mind stay anchored in Scripture**

Music Is A Powerful Gift:

- It began early in human history
- It affects the soul deeply
- It can glorify God or distract from Him

Therefore:

Use music as a servant of the Word—not a substitute for it.

1. Can Music Be “Spiritual,” “Soulish,” and “Bodily”?

The Bible doesn’t classify *music itself* into a neat three-part system—but it **does describe man** as having:

- **Spirit** (God-conscious) – John 4:24
- **Soul** (mind, will, emotions) – Psalm 42:5
- **Body/Flesh** (physical appetites) – Romans 6:12

So while Scripture doesn’t label music this way directly, you can **apply the distinction**

A. Spiritual Music (Godward, Truth-Filled)

Definition:

Music that is governed by the Word of God and directed toward Him

Colossians 3:16 connection:

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...”

Examples:

- Singing Psalms
- (“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”)
- Scripture-based compositions (like Handel’s *Messiah*)

Characteristics:

- Truth-centered
- God-focused
- Produces reverence, gratitude, worship

This is what Paul is commanding.

B. Soulful Music (Emotional, Expressive)

Definition:

Music that primarily appeals to man and nature

I was taught three categories:

- **Spiritual – from and directed toward God**
- **Soulful – centered in human emotion**
- **Demonic (or Satanic) – influenced by evil spirits**

This mirrors a broader anthropology (spirit–soul–body), which is applied to music.

Soulful Music:

- **Emotion-driven rather than Scripture-driven**
- **Focused on feelings, mood, and experience**
- **Often self-centered rather than God-centered**
- **Can be sentimental, romantic, or dramatic**

Examples:

- **Secular love songs**
- **Sentimental religious music lacking doctrinal depth**
- **Music that “moves you” but doesn’t teach truth**

Key emphasis:

Soulful music is not necessarily evil—but it is **inferior** and potentially dangerous if it replaces spiritual truth.

C. Fleshly/Bodily Music (Sensual, Physical-Driven)

Definition:

Music that primarily stimulates the **body or base appetites**, often bypassing the mind

Biblical principle:

- Galatians 5:16–21 (works of the flesh)
- 1 John 2:16 (“lust of the flesh...”)

Examples (Much of popular and Rock Music):

- Music designed mainly for:
 - sensuality
 - rebellion
 - aggression without restraint
- Rhythms or styles that overwhelm thought and elevate impulse

Characteristics:

- Body-first, truth-last
- Often tied to worldly values
- Can dull spiritual sensitivity

Truth:

The issue is not style alone—but **what it promotes and produces**.

I was taught about:

“Demonic Music”

Definition:

Music that is **inspired or influenced by evil spirits**, or that actively promotes rebellion against God.

How it was characterized:

- Associated with **rebellion, sensuality, and lawlessness**
- Designed to **excite the flesh** and bypass the mind
- Often marked (in his view) by:
 - heavy, driving rhythms
 - hypnotic repetition
 - chaotic or disordered structure

What it is connected to:

- Pagan worship practices
- Occult influence
- Certain modern music movements (especially mid–late 20th century rock)

Theological reasoning:

- Music has spiritual power (1 Sam. 16)
- Satan was associated with music (Ezekiel 28, as he interprets it)

¹ The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying,

² Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart *is* lifted up, and thou hast said, I *am* a God, I sit *in* the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou *art* a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God: (Ezek. 28:1-2 KJV)

¹³ Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: **the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.**

¹⁴ Thou *art* the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee *so*: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

¹⁵ Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.
(Ezek. 28:13-15 KJV)

- Music can be a **vehicle for spiritual influence—good or evil**

2. Does Music Attract or Repel Spiritual Forces?

What Scripture Clearly Shows

1 Samuel 16:23

David played... and the evil spirit departed from Saul.

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- **Theory: if some music can chase away demons, it is possible that some music attracts them**

Balanced Biblical Conclusion

1. Music Influences the Heart

And the heart is the **battleground** (Proverbs 4:23)

- If music:
 - feeds anger → it can move you toward sin
 - feeds lust → it can inflame the flesh
 - feeds pride → it can harden the heart

Where sin is cultivated, **spiritual darkness finds opportunity**

Let us Sing Psalms

Sung in Common Meter: 8.6.8.6

8 Syllables, 6 Syllables, 8 Syllables, 6 Syllables

¹ Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.¹

² But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. (Ps. 1:1-2 KJV)

Sung to tune of Amazing Grace

**1 That man hath perfect blessedness,
who walketh not astray**

In counsel of ungodly men,
nor stands in sinners' way,
2 Nor sitteth in the scorner's chair:
But placeth his delight
Upon God's law, and meditates
on his law day and night.

Great *is* the LORD,
And greatly to be praised
In the city of our God,
In the mountain of his holiness.
2 Beautiful for situation,
The joy of the whole earth,
Is mount Zion,
On the sides of the north,
The city of the great King.
(Ps. 48:1-2 KJV)
