

Attitudes and Instrumental Music

Introduction:

- 1) Some questions about God's word are easily answered by the acceptance or rejection of God's word. E.g. **Mt. 19:9**.
- 2) But others hinge more on the attitude we believe we are to take toward the Bible.
 - a) Does God demand obedience? Exact, strict obedience?
 - b) Does it matter if we make small changes?
 - c) Can we do things not specifically forbidden?
- 3) Could describe a lot of different questions, but we will be talking specifically about instrumental music.
- 4) However, I hope that we will be able to apply these principles to a lot of other questions.

I. SEVEN FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES.

A. God Does Not Think Like Man. **Isa. 55:8, 9**

1. Too often we inject "I think" or "I don't see" into discussions of right and wrong.
2. Understanding that God does not think as we do should make us cautious.
3. Think of examples of how God's ways can be different.
 - a. The walls of Jericho.
 - b. The healing of Naaman. **2 Kgs. 5:10-12**
 - c. The cross. **1 Cor. 1:18, 22-24**

B. God's Mind Is Only Known By Revelation.

1. God's mind being so much higher than ours, the only way it can be known is if He chooses to reveal it. **1 Cor. 2:9-13, 16**
2. If "you know" something is okay, how do you know it? Where's the passage?

C. God's Word Is Not to Be Changed.

1. Moses' exhortation to Israel. **Dt. 4:1, 2**
2. Even the angels cannot change the message. **Gal. 1:8, 9**
3. John sounded a stern warning. **Rev. 22:18, 19**

D. God's Word Is Complete.

1. Jesus promised the revelation of all truth. **Jn. 16:12, 13**
2. Thus the Scriptures can serve as a complete guide. **2 Tim. 3:16, 17**

E. God's Silence Does Not Grant Permission.

1. Since all truth that God deems necessary for us is revealed, we are to be cautious about imposing on God's silence.
2. Jesus argued against divorce on this basis. **Mt. 19:3-6**
3. The Hebrew writer twice writes of silence as restrictive.
 - a. "To which of the angels did He ever say?" **Heb. 1:4, 5, 13**
 - b. "Moses spoke nothing." **Heb. 7:11-14**

F. God Demands Obedience.

1. He always has.
 - a. Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel; Moses; the captivities.
2. Also a NT principle.
 - a. Not everyone who says “Lord, Lord.” **Mt. 7:21-23**
 - b. Savior of the obedient. **Heb. 5:8, 9**
 - c. Faith must be active. **Js. 2:20-26**

G. Obedience Extends to the Little Things.

1. How big a deal should be made of eating some fruit? Offering the wrong fire? Touching the ark?
2. Not to break a “least” commandment. **Mt. 5:17-19**
3. Every word is important. **Mt. 4:3, 4**

Summary:

1. With these important principles before us, let’s consider how we should approach such questions as the acceptability of instrumental music in worship
2. In light of what we have seen, should we not approach them with a concern for what God has said, trusting that His mind (i.e. His desires) has been made known?
3. Shouldn’t we serve God on the basis of what we *know* of His will and not what we *assume* He might desire or let us “get by with?”
4. Things don’t have to be forbidden to be wrong—they simply have to be outside the revelation of God’s will.

II. INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.

A. The Old Testament Passages.

1. OT passages are often given as proof that instrumental music is acceptable in worship today.
 - a. **2 Chron. 5:11-14; Ps. 150:1-6**
2. What do these (and like) passages prove?
 - a. The same Law which provided for animal sacrifices, Levitical priesthood, incense, tabernacle/temple, ritual washings, etc. included the use of instrumental music for their praises to God.
 - b. It also proves 1st century Christians were well aware of the possibilities for these instruments.
 - 1) If they are not found in the NT that should tell us something.
 - 2) If not found in the NT it will not be for the same reason that airplanes are not mentioned.

B. The New Testament.

1. When it comes to NT worship and music we have a different tune.
2. The only mentions of music in worship involve singing from the heart.
 - a. **Acts 16:25** Objection: but they were in prison and didn’t have access to any instruments.
 - 1) Let’s keep reading.
 - b. **1 Cor. 14:15** This seems to have involved a miraculous element, but contrast with **1 Chron. 25:1-3**.
 - 1) Harps and prophesying were found in association with each in the OT, but not in **1 Cor. 14**.
 - c. **Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16** If God’s silence is not permissive, no place can be found in our worship for the use of mechanical instruments.

3. In recent years some have contended that the word *psalms* implied and even necessitated an instrument.
 - a. I try to be fair with those who differ with me, but this argument was first advanced by men who had already decided the silence of God was permissive and were committed to instrumental music.
 - b. What do **Eph. 5:19** and **Col. 3:16** say to do with psalms? Sing them! Not a word about playing them.
 - c. When Jesus turned to the Psalms it was for the words, not the music. E.g. **Lk. 20:42; 24:44**

Conclusion:

- 1) I hope that lesson will help us to develop a more careful approach to spiritual matters. Our hearts must be attuned to God's revelation.
- 2) When it comes to instrumental music and every other issue that may arise, let's seek to resolve these matters with hearts that respect God's stated will.
- 3) God does not think like man; remember that.
- 4) Conclusion? Leave instrumental music off.
- 5) As we close today, do you know what God says about sin and salvation?