

## Sing with Understanding: Growing as Musical Worshipers, Part Two

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### Music observed in the Bible:

Music is an expressive form of human communication in which one combines elements of rhythm and pitched sound in a crafted way, thereby elevating the sounds beyond random accumulation, and, when intending to be artistic, elevates it beyond simple craft.

#### 1) Expressive human communication

##### a. Expressive

James 5:13	Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.
Colossians 3:16	Singing...with thankfulness in your hearts to God...
Zephaniah 3:14	Sing...be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.
Amos 8:3	The songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day...
Jeremiah 31:7, 12	For thus saith the Lord; Sing with gladness...

##### b. Communicative/Directional

Psalms 147:1-3	Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
Acts 16:25	Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God
1 Corinthians 14:15-16	Strive to excel in building up the church... I will sing with my mind also. Otherwise...how can anyone...say "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying?
Ephesians 5:19	Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord.

##### c. Human

Exodus 15	Moses and the people of Israel sang...
Judges 5	Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day...
1 Kings 4:32	He also spoke 3,000 proverbs, and his songs were 1,005.
2 Chronicles 35:25	All the singing men and singing women have spoken of Josiah in their laments to this day.

#### 2) Crafted combination of pitched sounds

##### a. Audible

2 Samuel 19:35	I am this day eighty years old...Can I still listen to the voice of singing men and singing women?
Psalms 147:1-3	My tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.
Daniel 3:5	When you hear the sound of...every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image...
Luke 15:25	As he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.
Acts 16:25	Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them...

##### b. Crafted combination

Numbers 21:17	Israel sang this song...
2 Samuel 23:1	The sweet psalmist of Israel...
Psalms 147:1-3	I will praise the name of God with a song...
Isaiah 38:20	We will play my music on stringed instruments...
Mark 14:26	When they had sung a hymn...
1 Corinthians 14:7	[If]...the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played?
Revelation 18:2	And the sound of...musicians...will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft...

#### 3) Elevation beyond simple craft

##### a. Skilled music-making

Psalms 147:1-3	<i>References to the "Chief Musician"</i>
1 Samuel 16:16	Seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre...
1 Chronicles 25:7	The number of them...who were trained in singing to the LORD, all who were skillful, was 288.
2 Chronicles 34:12	The Levites, all who were skillful with instruments of music...
Ezekiel 33:22	Like one who sings lustful songs with a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument...

### Music's function in corporate worship:

Music-making is a distinct act of worship commanded by God. While it serves various functions, it's function does not justify its existence; it needs no additional justification than God's command.

1) From Worshipers to God, as praise, proclamation, confession, offering, prayer, and response

Psalm 90:1	Sing to the Lord a new song...his praise in the assembly of the godly!	<i>praise</i>
Psalm 51:14	My tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.	<i>proclamation</i>
Psalm 27:6	I will offer in his tent sacrifices...sing and make melody to the Lord.	<i>offering</i>
Psalm 33:2	Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre...	<i>thanksgiving</i>
2 Chronicles 29:30	Hezekiah...commanded the Levites to sing praises to the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph...	

a. Examples

Holy, Holy, Holy	Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee...Only thou art holy...
Great Is Thy Faithfulness	Thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not...
Come, Thou Almighty King	Help us thy name to sing. Help us to pray.

2) From Worshipers to Worshipers, as exhortation

1 Corinthians 14	Strive to excel in building up the church... I will sing with my mind also. Otherwise...how can anyone...say "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying?
Ephesians 5:19	Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord.
Hebrews 2:12	I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.

a. Examples

O Worship the King	O worship the King, O tell of his might...
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	Ponder anew what the Almighty will do if with his love he befriend thee.
How Firm a Foundation	How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in his excellent word!

3) From Worship Leaders to Worshipers, as discipleship

Deuteronomy 31:19-32:33	Now therefore write this song and teach it to the people of Israel. Put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the people of Israel.
1 Chronicles 6:31	These are the men whom David put in charge of the service of song in the house of the Lord...
1 Chronicles 16:4-36	[David] appointed some of the Levites...to invoke, to thank, and to praise the Lord, the God of Israel. Asaph was the chief... David first appointed that thanksgiving be sung to the Lord by Asaph and his brothers. Oh give thanks to the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples! Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works!...Then all the people said, "Amen!" and praised the Lord.
1 Chronicles 51:1	David and the chiefs of the service also set apart for the service the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who prophesied with lyres, with harps, and with cymbals.

a. Examples

Prelude	Not background music for gathering, but an exhortation to prepare for worship
Choral Introit and Anthem	Declarative, confessional, exhortation, or praise, leading the congregation in posture
Communion music	Demonstration of humility, devotion, reflection
Postlude	Sending music in the fullness of thanksgiving, hope, and purpose

**Supplemental reading, pt. 2:**

Jeremy Begbie, *A Peculiar Orthodoxy: Reflections on Theology and the Arts* (Baker Academic, 2018)

Sarah Bereza, "The Right Kind of Music: Fundamentalist Christianity as Musical and Cultural Practice," Ph.D. diss. (Duke University, 2017)

Harold M. Best, *Unceasing Worship: Biblical Perspectives on Worship and the Arts* (InterVarsity Press, 2003)

Frank Burch Brown, *Good Taste, Bad Taste, Christian Taste: Aesthetics in Religious Life* (Oxford University Press, 2000)

Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful*, ed. Lee Rothfarb and Christoph Landerer (Oxford University Press, 2018)

Charles Jirkovsky, *Music in the Bible* (GMAR Publishing, 2023)

Anna E. Nekola, "Between This World and the Next: The Musical 'Worship Wars' and Evangelical Ideology in the United States, 1960-2005," Ph. D. diss. (University of Michigan, 2009)

Robert Woods and Bryan D. Walrath, ed., *The Message in the Music: Studying Contemporary Praise and Worship* (Abingdon Press, 2007)