

Do All to the Glory of God

A verse that covers almost every situation is found in 1 Corinthians 10:31. It says, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." God is glorified when we follow His word and apply His wisdom.

Recently the question was asked (by more than one person), "Is it okay to listen to 'gospel music' that uses [mechanical] instrumental music outside of the worship assembly?" Do the Scriptures address the question? Can we know what will glorify God on this issue?

1 Corinthians 14:15 and Hebrews 2:12 are directives for singing in the assembly of the church. Matthew 26:30 and Acts 16:25 address situations outside the assembly of the church. Romans 15:9; Hebrews 13:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16 and James 5:13 are general and may be applied to either the assembly of the church or outside the assembly.

One example of singing outside the assembly of the church was when Jesus and the disciples were gathered together following the institution of the Lord's supper on Thursday evening (Matthew 26:30). At this time the church had not yet been built. The second was when Paul and Silas were in prison at Philippi (Acts 16:25). In prison, with their feet in the stocks, they would not have had access to common instruments of music. But at the Lord's Supper this is not the case. If Jesus had so desired, He could have found some mechanical instruments of music for this solemn occasion. The scriptures say that they only sang in both Matthew 26:30 and in Mark 14:26.

The general verses that may be applied to either corporate worship or outside the assembly do provide God's instruction about praising Him at any time. James 5:13 would be a good example. "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms."

This verse would apply both in and out of the worship. There is mention of adding mechanical instruments of music to the singing. Making melody in your heart also applies in situations in and outside the worship assembly (Ephesians 5:19). And since God is specific, then man may not alter it.

What about singing songs of praise as entertainment outside the assembly? Once an activity is defined as "entertainment" does that remove the restrictions God has given? Does fornication stop being wrong when you watch it on television or at the movie theater? And, more directly to our situation, does taking God's name in vain stop being sinful if it is labeled as entertainment? The name of God must always be spoken with reverence and awe. Entertainment does not meet the high standard of reverence toward God.

Another point concerning the entertainment aspect should be considered. Those outside the church, especially those who are looking to find fault with the church of the Bible, will look for every opportunity to discredit the church through the practices of her members. Being inconsistent concerning mechanical instruments of music outside the worship will provide ammunition for the enemies of the church to speak evil against her. And rest assured, they will.

Anytime a Christian is praising God, it should be done in accord with God's divine instructions on the subject. Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, glorify God. Remember, "whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

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