Developing Personal Convictions- Music

Review

Last week we started talking about the importance of developing your own personal convictions. We said a conviction was a strong belief or values based on scripture that guide your life- the decisions you make.

We said that the starting point was a desire to be pleasing to God in all areas of your life.

I gave you a plan for developing convictions that has three steps: “Since, Then, So”.

Step #1: “Since this is true”- Investigate God’s Word

Step #2: “Then I will do”- Apply Scriptural principles to the specific area

Step #3: “So this is my conviction” -Determine what your conviction is & implement it.

“Since (this is true), then (I will do), So (this is my conviction).”

Intro

It’s been said, “Give me the music and I can control the culture.” Do you agree?

Music is a powerful medium. It combines the mind, emotion, and body in a powerful way.

And so, we need to be discerning as Christians about music. “Do you ever think about the effect music might be having on you? Is it just innocent entertainment? Is it possible to listen to too much music? Could music be affecting me in ways I am unaware?”

I. Music is God’s Idea

A. God created music and He thoroughly enjoys it.

1) The longest book in the Bible is the Psalms, which was the songbook of Israel.

2) Musicians were scheduled to play and sing regularly in the worship of God (1 Chron. 16:5-7, 37) Asaph - chief musician, play lyre, harp, cymbals, trumpets

3) Jesus sang with His disciples (Matt. 26:30) After the last supper, they sang a hymn

4) The book of Revelation tells us that music will continue in eternity

Rev. 5:12-14

**“**In a loud voice they sang:

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,   to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”

**13**Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”

**14**The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped

B. The Purpose of Music

1) David used music primarily for worship

2) The Psalms regularly exhort us to sing a new song to the Lord and to praise Him to the sound of musical instruments (Ps 149:1-5)

Psalm 33:1-3

“Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous;   it is fitting for the upright to praise him.  
**2**Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.  
**3**Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy.”

3) We are told to minister to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs

Col. 3:16

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.”

There is something very special about music that impacts the whole person- body, mind, emotions, and spirit. Since this is true, setting words to music helps us to remember it. That might be part of what Col. 3:16 is getting at when we use music to minister God’s word to each other.

4) When Saul was tormented by evil spirits, David played on his harp to soothe

him (1 Sam. 16:14-23). Instrumental music can help to bring peace and calm to our souls.

There is a whole branch of therapy called “music therapy” and it uses music to minister to a person emotionally and spiritually.

5) The Israelites used musical instruments (trumpet) to warn of danger (Neh. 4:20)

6) The Israelites used trumpets to sound the battle cry (Judges 15:14-23)

7) While the primary purpose of music is worship, the Bible allows it to be used for other good purposes that can bring glory to God.

8) David used music to help him sort out his emotions before the Lord. One third of psalms are songs of lament, where David is expressing his pain and sorrow to God.

9) Certainly, wholesome music that is not designed for direct worship, can be used as a form of entertainment.

10) I want us to be careful that we don’t fall into the “sacred-secular” argument. This says that if something is sacred it is good and if it is secular then it is bad. The bible doesn’t give us such categories. The question that we need to ask is, “Does this bring glory to God and does it help me follow Christ?

C. The Style of Music

1. Nations all over the world use a variety of musical styles to worship God.

a) God is not western or eastern, but a God who is diverse.

b) If we went to China as a missionary to plant a church, what kind of music would you use? Western music? No, you’d use Eastern music that you could put Christian words to, that would complement the message you were trying to communicate.

2. Why didn’t God preserve the music of the Psalms? The Bible is cross-cultural and so is music. This allows for various styles of music.

II. Music and its impact

A. Music is an organized combination of melody, harmony, and rhythm.

1) These three elements carry no moral value in and of themselves.

2) There aren’t “evil” melodies or “false” rhythms

3) **But that doesn’t mean that music does affect us in profound ways.**

B. Music affects our emotions

1) Think about watching a movie without a musical backup. It would seem flat and empty.

2) Why does it affect us?

(a) Our responses are based on learned musical principles

(1) When music is fast and in a major key, it sounds happy

(2) When music is slow and in a minor key, it sounds sad

3) Music affects us by its volume, familiarity, and our background

4) Music affects us by our past associations with the music. It tends to get meaning from the things that surround it. Sometimes positive, like Christmas carols; sometimes negative, if associated with sinful things.

5) We must also be aware of the context in which we are experiencing the music. For example, if the music is acceptable, but it is being performed in a sensual, provocative way, then that can have a negative impact on us.

6) The point I am making is that just because music may not even have words, it doesn’t mean that it is not impacting us.

If you listen to a certain style of music and it makes you get aggressive or you listen to a different kind of music and it makes you depressed, you need to ask, “Is this helping me as a follower of Jesus Christ?”

7) Tell story of guy who objected to Christian rock because it reminded him of his sinful lifestyle before he was saved.

C. Music affects our hearts and minds via lyrics

1) Phil. 4:8 tells us what kinds of things we are to think about

Phil 4:8

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

Col. 3:2,5

“Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. Put to death therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, greed, which is idolatry.”

(a) We sing songs of praise to God that we’ve been set free from sin

(b) Then, at times, we sing songs about violence, sensuality, and inappropriate relationships, the very sins we have been set free from

(c) James 3:10, “From the same mouth came blessing and cursings. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.”

2) Sometimes people say, “Well, I don’t even listen to the words. I don’t know what they’re saying.”

(a) Why not? As Christians, we should be asking what songs actually mean.

(b) We’re to do all to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31)

(c) If we don’t listen to the words, what are we doing on Sunday?

(d) We must learn to discern

3) Over time, worldly song lyrics will weaken your defenses and redirect your heart toward the world (Rom. 13:14)

4) What you listen to is never neutral, because our sinful hearts are involved. Why do you listen to the music you do? What does it say about your relationship with God?

5) We need to remember that the spiritual battle is won or lost in the mind.

2 Cor. 11:3

“But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

6) That is why Paul tells us to “take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ.” 2 Cor. 10:5

7) That is not possible to do if you are continually filling your mind with messages that are contrary to God’s Word.

8) Tell story of the selection of the **king’s coach driver being selected to transport the king’s children up the mountain to the palace.**

They were asked, “How close can you get to the edge without going over?” Each applicant gave various answers, indicating their skill and confidence. The one that was hired was the one who said, “If it’s the king’s children, I want to stay as far from the edge as possible. He was hired.

9) If we’re concerned about the world and its effect on our souls, we will want to stay as far from the edge as we can.

Romans 12:2: “Do not conform to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds.”

10) Music is a powerful influence in our lives for good and bad. We need to take it seriously, and ask the question, “What is going to help me please God and help me to become more like Jesus?

III. Practical Steps in Choosing Your Music

“**Since** this is true”- (which is what we were just looking at)

“**Then** I will do”

A. Use the Scriptures to evaluate your decisions about music. God gave us music to not just make us happy, but holy. Unexamined musical selections leave us at the mercy of our own sinful desires and the influence of a godless culture.

1. If you are serious about growing spiritually, you will evaluate the message of the songs to make sure they are not contrary to Scripture.

2. If you are continually filling your mind with garbage you will never be able to have victory in the Christian life.

B. Be sure your musical selections do not have objectionable content or ungodly contexts.

1. An example of ungodly context might be the atmosphere of a concert that is very sensual or the radio DJ’s comments between songs.

2. If you have music you listen to when you’re backsliding, throw it away.

Romans 13:14, “Make no provisions for the flesh.”

C. Do your priorities and schedule revolve around music?

1) Do you always have music playing?

2) Do you have to buy the latest recording?

3) Why not consider doing a music fast for the sake of spending time with God and dealing with your priorities.

4) 1 Cor. 6:12 warns about becoming controlled or addicted by that which might even be good.

D. Does the music you listen to cause you to have an emotional response that isn’t helping in your walk with Christ?

For example, Does it make you more aggressive or agitated?

Does it make you feel more depressed?

E. Does my music lead me to love the Savior more or cause my affections for Christ to

diminish?

Conclusion Since (this is true) 🡺Then (I will do)**->** So (this is my conviction) ...

1. **Since** the primary purpose of music is to worship God (Ps 33:1-3, 1 Cor. 10:31), **then** I should listen to music that helps me praise God. **So**, I will get rid of the songs on my playlist that glorify sex and violence. My conviction will be that I want to listen to music that is never contrary to God’s Word.

2. **Since** music has such a powerful influence on my heart and mind, and God wants me to set my mind on things that are good, right, and true (Phil. 4:8, Col. 3:1-2), **then** I should not listen to songs that tempt me to think sinfully. **So** my conviction will be to listen to music that uplifts my spirit and focuses my mind on what is good, right, and true.

3. **Since** I am not to be addicted (controlled) by anything (1 Cor. 6:12), **then** I should ...

**So**, my conviction will be…..

4. **Since** I am to seek not just what is permissible, but what is best (Phil. 1:9-10), **then** I should… **So**, my conviction will be….

Additional questions for small group

1. What kind of music do you typically listen to?

2. Does the music you listen to pass the Philippians 4:8 test?

3. Does the music you listen to help you as a follower of Jesus Christ?

4. What convictions do you need develop about the kind of music that you will listen to that will help you in your walk with Christ?