

Biblical Worldview of Music

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[0 : 0 0] So we've been in a study on biblical worldview, and over the last couple months, we've thought together about a variety of topics, how we think, the sanctity of life, gender, economics or economics, I don't remember, self-image, marriage, education, and the last time we saw social justice.

Well, today we're going to be thinking about the biblical worldview of music. And as we begin, let's first briefly think about worldview again as a way of review.

Roger Kryan broke it down this way in the first session, at least I think, Roger, I hope this doesn't butcher what you presented. Worldview is a framework of ideas for understanding the world and for living in it.

So note the two-fold purpose of worldview, for understanding our world and for living in it. So we want to develop a biblical framework of ideas and beliefs.

That's kind of like having a pair of glasses with grids on them. And we can look around and see what lines up with that grid and what doesn't.

[1 : 2 0] And of course, that grid is God's Word. So if we have an understanding about what God says about a certain topic, we can look around and say, oh, that does not line up with what I'm seeing in God's Word.

Or, oh, that does line up with what God has revealed to us. So having a clearly defined worldview will help us to rightly understand our world.

And I think this is probably what the writer to the Hebrews had in mind when he said, solid food is for the mature who through constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Constant use of the Word of God will help us to understand our world better and to understand this is right, this is wrong. So let's think about the second purpose of worldview.

It's not just for understanding our world, but also for living in it. And these are very closely related because how we understand affects how we live.

[2 : 3 2] In other words, what we believe affects what we do. So for example, if I believe there's gold buried in my backyard, I will act on that.

I will dig it up. If I believe a chair will hold me, I'll sit in it. If I don't believe it'll hold me, I won't sit in it. What we believe affects what we do.

So you can see the importance of having beliefs that are based on truth. Why do I think there's gold in my backyard? Is it because I had a dream?

Or I have a gut feeling it must be there? Or is it because I've called someone in with a metal detector that finds gold? I think they have those.

And he's going around my yard and it beeps and he says, Charlie, in this five square foot area, there's definitely gold down there. I'll get my shovel and start digging.

[3 : 3 1] Of course, after I call 8-1-1. Well, praise the Lord, he doesn't leave us the dreams or gut feelings about how we establish our framework of beliefs on different subjects.

He's given us his thoughts, his perfect wisdom in the scriptures. 2 Peter 1-4 says, His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

So we have what we need for life and godliness. Where does it come from? Through our knowledge of him. Understanding what God thinks gives us everything we need to know to live in this world.

We hear this in Paul's prayer for the Philippians. And this is my prayer that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight so that you may be able to discern what is best.

There's the understanding, our world. And may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ. There's the living in it. So that's what these classes on worldview have been about.

[4 : 52] Understanding, increasing our knowledge of what God thinks about these subjects. So that we will live right. It's truth for life. Well today we're going to be looking at a biblical worldview of music.

And so here's the definition we'll be working through this morning. And I'll just kind of highlight. Ooh, got chopped off a little. I'll highlight different areas as we go through it.

Music is an everlasting good gift from God that reflects his image and is to be used to bring glory to God in personal worship, in corporate worship, and in the enjoyment of it as a gift from God.

So first of all, music as a good gift from God. Like all good gifts that we've been talking about in this series, God is the creator.

James 1.17 says, Every good and perfect gift is from above and coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights. And this is true of music.

[5 : 58] Just think of all the ways that you've been blessed and benefited from good music throughout your life. How much joy and enjoyment, relaxation, exhilaration.

Some of you enjoy playing an instrument. Think of all the times you've praised God and benefited from praising God by singing to Him with His people or drawn near to God in a song in your personal devotions.

Stan shared with me this week that Christian music has been such a help to him in his difficult recovery. It's hard to imagine life without music.

What a good gift it is from God. Well, when did music start? When was that first musical note sung? In a chronological reading of the Bible, the first mention of man's involvement with music is in Genesis 4.17.

It says, Jubal was the father of all who played the harp and flute. The bottom line is, we don't know when the first musical note was sung. But we do have biblical evidence that it was not sung by man.

[7 : 19] In fact, it was actually before man was even here. Job 38. The Lord's speaking to Job and He's correcting him about his wrong view that God should have to answer to him.

And this is what God said to Job. Were you there when I laid the earth's foundations? So He's taking Job back to creation. And He goes on to say, Who laid its cornerstone while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?

I realize it's not the main point of this verse, but notice that music, singing, was already there at creation. Music predates man.

How boastful it is for man to think that man created music. So next, music reflects God's image.

So God is the creator of music and we can see His fingerprints all over it. And that's actually what makes it a good gift that we enjoy. His character is embedded in it.

- [8 : 27] So we can enjoy God's image in music and we can bear God's image in how we use it. Let's look at what we can see of God's character in music.
- First, creativity. Songwriters create songs. God created music. Romans 4.17 says, God calls into existence the things that do not exist.
- And that's what He did with music. Even before He created the universe. And yet, God gives people gifts to take those tools of music that He's created and to form new songs.
- To create new songs. And so part of God's image that we see and experience in music is creativity. Next, emotion.
- God has strong emotions. And He created music with the ability to affect our emotions. Here's a few examples. A mother softly singing to her baby to put her to sleep.
- [9 : 39] Similarly, a calming effect of music when David played the harp to calm King Saul. I'm sure every one of us has had a feeling of nostalgia when we've listened to a song that takes us back to when we were younger.
- And we can almost envision the place where we were when we were hearing or singing that song. Another example, Jesus in Matthew 17 refers to songs that make you want to dance or songs that make you want to mourn.
- They affect our feelings. Even a particular instrument can elicit an emotional response. There is one percussion instrument that I think always produces an emotional response of joy.
- And that's sleigh bells. Who can listen to Christmas music and not feel joy? We have a grandson who likes to watch movies.
- I know that's really rare. And whenever there's a scene that's slightly scary, he does this. Why does he do that?
- [10 : 54] Well, there's music that's producing fear. Even more than the picture. If you've ever watched a scary movie without the music, it's not very scary with the volume turned down.
- So music often creates an emotional response. Different notes interact with each other in different ways depending on the spacing between those notes.
- Even people who aren't musically trained can tell or feel the difference between a minor chord and a major chord. Cindy, will you help us?
- A minor chord is sad. A major chord is happy. So Cindy's going to play a couple chords for us back to back and we're going to take a test and see if we can identify which one is happy, which one is sad.
- The first or the second. One more time just to make sure we got it.
- [12 : 05] Which one is sad? First or second? Okay. You passed. Good job. Isn't it amazing that God has designed sound waves of musical notes traveling through the air into our ear based on the spread between those notes and in that case it was one half step.
- One note away and yet it produces a totally different emotional response in us. That's amazing. That's the emotion that God has put into music.
- Harmony is another way we see God in music. His image implanted in music. That's where two different pitches or notes are sung or played or not just two where different notes or pitches are sung or played together at the same time.
- So Cindy's going to play three notes individually and then play those same three notes together. together. Thank you.
- Harmony reflects the Trinity. When you hear a chord of three notes played like we just did those three notes played together they're sounding through each other.

[13 : 31] there's three distinct sounds and yet they're making one sound together and that that is just an audible reminder of our God our triune God.

Next order so you may or may not be aware that music has a lot of math in it a lot of order and structure. I googled why are there twelve notes in an octave and the answer I got it was so deep into math that I didn't understand any of the sentences in the four page explanation.

I mean it was deep and I've watched YouTube videos of musicians that just blow my mind as they talk about the chord structures and how they relate to each other mathematically and why am I talking about this?

Well I think it's good to recognize that as intricate and as complex as our music is it's just scratching the surface of what God has created.

Western music I'm not talking about country and western Rick I'm talking about western hemisphere okay western music has taken an endless number of notes and broken them down to just twelve okay and let me demonstrate twelve notes in an octave I'll sing an octave okay that's an octave there's thousands of notes per pitches in that our written western music has broken it down into just twelve because if it broke it down into a thousand it would be too complex and we couldn't grasp it and so it just reminds us that God's ways and thoughts are so far above ours and I think that shows up in music so God God's image is stamped on music by creativity emotion harmony order and there's one more way I'd like to point out that music bears God's image and that is

[15 : 55] God himself sings God not only created music he enjoys it he participates in it our God himself sings let's look at some biblical evidence of this Zephaniah 317 says and I'm sorry I'm not going to give you time to turn to them you can if you want but I'm just going to read Zephaniah 317 the Lord your God is with you he is mighty to save he will take great delight in you he will quiet you with his love he will rejoice over you with singing that's something to think of God rejoicing over you personally with singing and the fact that music existed before creation and the fact that God expresses his joy his delight in singing would lead me to believe or at least to say it's highly likely that our triune

God enjoyed music within the fellowship of the Trinity even before creation remember what we saw recently in John 17 on Sunday night a few weeks ago the father glorifies the son the son glorifies the father so I can't help but think that one of the ways they do that is to sing songs about each other and to each other God sings over his children Jesus also sings Psalm 22 is a prophetic psalm that shows the suffering of Jesus and the glories that would follow in verse 22 of Psalm 22 he says I will declare your name to my brothers in the congregation I will praise you now prophecy can be hard to understand is he talking is that talking about David or Jesus well we have biblical commentary of this verse in

Hebrews 2 and it's definitely talking at least about Jesus where it says he says in Hebrews 2 11 Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers verse 12 he Jesus says I will declare your name to my brothers in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises so Jesus praises the Lord he rejoices in our salvation that he's bringing many sons to glory another similar example of Jesus singing is in Romans 15 and again it's quoting Psalm 18 that Jesus was singing therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles I will sing hymns to your name Matthew 26 and it's a parallel passage in Mark 14 tells us the setting is after the last supper and it says when they had sung a hymn they went out to the

Mount of Olives as we have seen already Jesus sang the Psalms didn't he one of the Psalms that was commonly sung to celebrate Passover was Psalm 118 can you imagine Jesus the night he is going to die singing these words from Psalm 118 with his disciples the Holy Spirit is also very active in singing it's the Holy Spirit that inspired the Psalms and other songs written down in Scripture it's the Holy Spirit that helps us to sing Ephesians 5 17 be filled with the Spirit and what will happen when you are speak to one another with psalms hymns and spiritual songs sing and make music in your heart to the

Lord as we think about how the image of God is reflected in music and how we can bear this image one important way that we do this is by singing he sings so we should sing next let's look at the truth that music is to be used to bring glory to God and we're going to look at three ways we can do this in personal worship in corporate worship and in the enjoyment of music as a good gift from God so we're going to start with this last one that I mentioned the enjoyment of music as a good gift from God I want to ask does the Bible give us any use of music other than direct worship of God in other words is it okay and actually we don't want to just be okay do we is it good is it good to listen to songs or sing songs not written specifically for thoughts on

[21 : 15] God songs about everyday life love joy songs with no lyrics at all instrumental music like classical or jazz well we've already cited verses about David playing calming music for King Saul or Jesus mentioning that there's music that makes you want to dance or makes you want to mourn and I recognize that just because these are mentioned doesn't mean God's putting his stamp of approval on them really the Bible doesn't give us a list of what music we should listen to and what we shouldn't but like so many areas in life the Bible is full of wisdom wise principles to guide our decisions and that includes our decisions on what music we should listen to like everything in the world music has been affected by the fall you can turn on the radio and hear it in an instant a man's taken this good gift of music

God and it's made to exalt wickedness or foolishness so God's wise commands need to be our guide in our selection of music and I'm going to give us just a few Proverbs 4 23 guard your heart for it is the well spring of life we got to be careful what we take in through our senses it goes straight into our heart and what we put into our heart affects how well our heart will function for God so songs that have lyrics that are glorifying immorality need to be rejected need to be off the playlist Romans 12 2 do not let the world squeeze you into its mold there's pressure exerted on us to feel culturally relevant to be in we don't want to have to say I don't listen to that or I don't watch that we need to dare to be a

Daniel a Shadrach a Meshach a Bednego who stood when the rest of the world was bowing to music very good yeah that's right yes Philippians 4 8 is another command and principle in guiding us in our music selection whatever is true whatever is noble whatever is right pure lovely admirable excellent praiseworthy think about such things so can a song that's not written for worship be true noble right or pure lovely admirable excellent or praiseworthy I say yes it can there are many songs about the joy of living the beauty of nature of friendship even a pain of a broken heart that help us to emotionally connect with life and instrumental songs that can help us relax or exhilarate us

I see trees of green red roses too I see them bloom for me and you and I think to myself what a wonderful world and we're not going to sing that in our worship service this morning but it's something that we can enjoy as a Christian as a child of God and we can connect those joys to God as a Christian that's what the unbelieving world can't do I think it's wonderful that God causes unbelievers to write good music that his children can enjoy it shows his sovereignty over the hearts of men and over music and when we enjoy music as a good gift from God it's pleasing to him he's our father he's given us a good gift he wants to see us enjoy it 1 Corinthians 10 31 whatever you do eating or drinking or whatever you do do it all for the glory of

God one other verse that I think is a good one to give us guidance in our selecting what music we listen to is Hebrews 12 1 let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us notice the two categories the things that hinder and the sin what does that tell you about things that hinder two categories things that hinder sin what does that tell you about these things that hinder that's right they're not necessarily he's not talking about bad things things that are bad in and of themselves there can be good things that we are involved in but are they keeping us from the best things so it's about proportion here we need to get rid of things that are keeping us from the best things too much of a good thing will keep us from what is best so while there are a few verses in the

[26 : 53] Bible that talk about the use of music other than worship by far what God talks about most is using music to directly worship him either personally or corporately so let's think about the use of music to worship God and first we'll think for a minute about what worship is worship could be defined as the response we have when we sincerely focus our thoughts on God as he is revealed in scripture so it's a response so we say we've come here to worship today and we can sing and we can pray we can hear a sermon we can give our offering and we can walk out the door having never worship what is God looking for in worship well he tells us in John 4 he's looking for spirit and he's looking for truth so worship in the spirit according to the spirit is to be sincere to be all in to be fully engaged in what you're doing and the balance to that worship in spirit is worship in truth according to the scriptures and what they reveal to us about

God one without the other is not worship let's think about music now in our private worship God's good gift of music is to be part of our personal worship do you sing to God as part of your private worship he tells us to David says many times I will sing to the Lord Psalm 5 11 says let all who take refuge in you be glad let them ever sing for joy Psalm 32 11 says rejoice in the Lord and be glad you righteous sing all you who are upright in heart there's no instruction here to wait until you're in the congregation to do this singing is to be part of our individual worship to

God not just reserved for times when we gather together well why sing as part of our worship well it's pretty obvious right God told us to we just saw that but is that really what what starts us singing here's an illustration that John Piper gave that I think is really helpful suppose suppose on my anniversary I bring home a dozen long stemmed roses for Noel when she meets me at the door I hold out the roses and she says oh Johnny they're beautiful thank you and she gives me a big hug then suppose I hold up my hand and say matter of factly don't mention it it was my duty what happens is not the exercise of duty a noble thing do not we honor those we dutifully serve no not much not if there's no heart in it dutiful roses are a contradiction of terms if

I am not moved by spontaneous affection for her as a person the roses do not honor her in fact they belittle her they are a very thin covering for the fact that she does not have the worth or beauty in my eyes to kindle affection all I can muster is a calculated expression of marital duty and I hope we see how that connects to worship the real duty of worship is not the outward duties of praying and singing and hearing the word and giving our offering it's that inward duty the command delight yourself in the Lord and the Psalms show us how to delight ourselves in the Lord when they say I will sing and then he'll give a reason so many times and notice none of these reasons are because it's my duty okay we're going to several of you have verses that

I've handed out we'll read those and listen for the reasons that we sing listen for what starts our hearts singing first one is Psalm 13 13 5 6 I trust in your unfailing love my heart rejoices in your salvation I will sing the Lord for he has been good okay unfailing love salvation his goodness Psalm 18 you exult me above my foes from violent man therefore I will praise you among the Lord I will sing praises to your name okay he's rescued us Psalm 30 he's clothed us with joy

[32 : 33] Psalm 57 I will praise you among the nations I will sing of you among the peoples for great is your love reaching to the heavens your faithfulness reaches to the skies his love and faithfulness Psalm 59 I will sing of your strength in the morning I will sing of your love you are my fortress my refuge in time to trouble all strength love love love love he's our fortress our refuge Psalm 101 I will sing of your love and justice to you oh Lord I will sing praise all right love his justice will start us singing Psalm 104 may the glory of the Lord endure forever may the Lord rejoice in his works he who looks at the earth and it trembles who touches the mountains and the smoke I will sing to the Lord all my life I will sing praise to my God as long as

I will okay his glory his works these are the things that start us singing it's delighting in God that causes us to sing and what pleases God about our singing it's not how we sound what pleases him is that our minds are thinking about him and we're wanting to express and rejoice in him and express our praise to him and that overflows on our lips in a song now I'm not going to pretend that there aren't days when I don't feel the delight in God that I should you know I say these are the things that start us singing well it's not always that way I don't always feel that delight in God so what am I to do avoid my time with him because it might be hypocritical no those are the very times more than ever that I need to come to him in honesty and say

Lord my heart is cold and it's not because of you will you light that flame in my heart that flame of love to you and it's as I sing or read or pray or meditate that he often does that so yeah we need to use the means of grace to start that delight if it's not already there let's turn our thoughts to glorifying God through public worship corporate worship I was glad when they said to me let us come let us go into the house of the Lord public worship is about being in his presence in a special way that's even better than our private worship where do I get that public worship is being in his presence in a special way that is even better than private worship Psalm 87 2 says the

Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob so the gates of Zion represent the gathered people in Jerusalem the dwelling places of Jacob represent individuals or families so in other words the Lord delights in the public worship of his gathered people even more than our private worship as individuals or families public worship is the climax of our experience with God and since singing is part of this I would conclude that the highest possible use of music is singing God's praises with God's people on his day what is it that elevates singing God's praises together what is it about that that makes it so wonderful well first of all together okay it's lots of people singing

God's praises from their heart is better than one person singing their praises to God he gets more praise come uh Psalm 95 come let us sing to the with joy to the Lord let us shout aloud to the rock of our salvation let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song Psalm 34 3 glorify the Lord with me let us exalt his name together so this multiplying of praises makes public worship it elevates it what else makes public worship better than private I should say even better than private we sing when we sing together we edify each other we can't do that in our private worship in the same way Colossians 3 16 says let the word of

[37 : 44] Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom and as you sing psalms hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God so when we're singing together we're reminding each other the things that about are true and we're building each other up so it's great to multiply our voices in praise to God it's great to edify others singing God's praises together also unites our hearts around him we agree together as we sing the same words at the same time with harmonies that not only sound good but reflect the harmony that God has given among his people so music unites us let's think for a minute about music and unity if singing together unites people why is it that so many times music is a divisive issue in the church

I mean we would have to probably go all the way back to the reformers to find agreement on music in the church right actually not there was a lot of difference even among reformers you think they're like minded they're going to think the same well Zwingli a Swiss reformer was a trained musician he understood the power of music but he felt it had no place in worship he believed that silence was the answer for hearing God's word and contemplation John Calvin also knew the power of music and carefully restricted its use lyrics were limited to the Psalms there were no harmonies no choirs except for a group of children who led the congregational singing Martin Luther has been called the father of congregational singing he knew that the doctrines and theologies could be taught by singing hymns and that young people especially would benefit from exposure to wholesome music he said that he wrote songs in four part harmony for no other reason than that he wanted to attract the youth away from the love songs and carnal pieces and to give them something wholesome to learn instead so very different ideas about worship and music and we should all be aware that music has the potential to divide

I've been referring a lot to the Psalms this morning the Psalms are songs right God preserved the words of those songs he did not choose to preserve the tune of that song any idea why why didn't he he could have I think it's because it allows for variety in music a tune can change a song can actually be improved with a better tune there are plenty of differences represented in this room age gender nationality occupation hobbies interests so why are we all here we're all pretty different what are we all doing in this same room well we're here because of something that we have in common that is more important than any differences we have we're here because we love

Jesus we're here because we want to see him exalted we want to worship the one true God he's broken down all the barriers that these differences can create in fact if we had more differences if we had more nationalities represented here would it not exalt the way God unifies his worshipers some churches have separate worship services for different worship styles and that's usually revolved around music and I think what a sad thing that God's people would be divided based on musical preference I know within our body there are differences in musical tastes and preferences but God has made singing one of the ways he wants us to worship him because he enjoys the unity that he creates he enjoys that he is the primary reason that we're coming together I'm going to skip down to one word that I haven't talked about yet and that is everlasting music is not just something that's going to pass away like other parts of

God's creation our bodies nature it will be renewed what biblical evidence do we have of this David says more than once in the psalm I will sing of your love forever that's pretty clear music isn't going away I just want to close with a look at Revelation 4 and 5 and we won't take time to read through it but it's a vision of heaven that God gave to John and I want you to picture what is happening in your mind as I go through it it's centered around the throne of God and that throne is surrounded by 24 other thrones and there are 24 elders with gold crowns and there's flashes of lightning and peals of thunder and in the center around the throne there's four living creatures and praise begins with these four living creatures saying holy holy holy is the Lord God almighty who was and is and is to come and then the 24 elders fall down and they cast their crowns before him and they say you are worthy our

[43 : 50] Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things and by your will they were created and have their being and then the singing begins by the four creatures and the 24 elders who have harps and they're singing you and you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation you have made them to be a kingdom of priests to serve our God and they will reign on the earth and it just keeps building many angels join in 10,000 times 10,000 are added to this choir and in a loud voice they sing worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise and then finally it comes to the apex where everyone in all creation is singing things on the earth things under the earth things in the sea and all that is in them and they all sing to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb be praise and honor and glory and power forever and ever this is where music is headed this is where worship of

God is headed why are they worshiping because God is worthy it said over and over you are worthy it's the right thing to do in his presence and no one in this account is struggling with wondering thoughts thinking about what they're going to do later may God help us one day our hearts will be made perfect to worship him like this well I hope I hope the lenses through which you view music are sharpened a little bit not only so that we can look around and say oh yeah that lines up or that doesn't but so that we can look in and say does that line up with what God God's good design for this