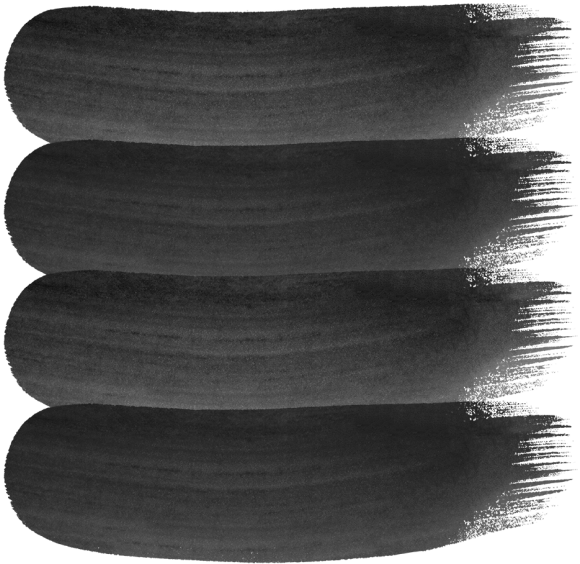


QUICK THEOLOGY

Theology in Worship Music



PHYLICIA MASONHEIMER

Copyright © 2023 by Every Woman a
Theologian LLC

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review. For more information, address:
phylicia@phyliciamasonheimer.com

Published by Every Woman a Theologian LLC

Cover design by Eric Novak.

Every Woman a Theologian and the Every Woman a Theologian logo are trademarks of Every Woman a Theologian LLC.

Printed in the United States of America.



Introduction

The topic of worship should be approached, not with a critical spirit, but with a desire to truly honor God with our words; to worship Him rightly. When it comes to worship music, it's very easy to descend into a hyper-critical, cynical attitude. But cynicism is not of the Lord! Jesus was not cynical. When cynicism reigns in our hearts, we can't help but find fault. Critical thinking is essential, but a critical spirit must be rejected as we study the topic of worship music in the church.

There is no question that inaccurate, unbiblical, or even just ridiculous worship music exists. But there's also a lot of good worship music in the world and I want to ensure an attitude of honor for the Lord and for Christians who believe differently on issues like this.

Before we get to specific examples of worship songs and how to discern through them, I first want to look at the basis for *how* we discern. The foundation for our

interaction with worship music and songs of praise is found in our approach to worship itself. To do this we will briefly study the theological backdrop to worship: the regulative and the normative principles of worship.



Regulative Principle

The regulative principle of worship teaches that God commanded us to worship Him in a specific way and with specific elements. Most Christians who hold to the regulative principle look to Leviticus 10. In Leviticus 10, Nadab and Abihu, the high priest Aaron's sons, went into the tabernacle and presented unauthorized fire before the Lord. These two men ignored God's rules, marched into the tabernacle and made an offering on their own terms and God struck them dead for it.

Those who hold to the regulative principle point to Nadab and Abihu as proof we can't simply worship God how we want. We have to worship Him in the ways and with the things He has endorsed. Another example of regulating worship is in 1 Corinthians 14, where Paul corrects the Corinthian church. Here Paul addresses spiritual gifts (tongues), advising the church not to speak in tongues however and whenever they wanted. Paul emphasized there is a necessary order, there needs to be

a translator, people need to take turns encouraging one another rather than descending into chaos. Supporters of the regulative principle point to these Scripture passages as evidence that we are to worship God in a specific way, not however we please.

The regulative principle is common in Reformed churches because John Calvin talked extensively about this topic. This principle of worship is also found in the Church of Christ and some Anabaptist churches. The Church of Christ has no musical instruments for this reason. John Calvin also refrained from using musical instruments in worship because he believed that “God disapproves of all modes of worship that are not expressly sanctioned by His Word.”

Some would argue against this, pointing out that the Psalms are worship to God and they involved musical instruments, or that Miriam led Israel in worship of God with a tambourine. That can be argued, but those who hold to the regulative principle of worship typically are looking for truths specifically outlined in Scripture about worship if they are to practice it. Some people who hold to this principle no longer celebrate Christmas or Easter because such holidays (a form of worship) are not outlined as Christian holidays in Scripture.