

# Hymnspiration

**Why We Sing What We Sing!**



**A Brief Study of the Music of the Bible Believing Christian**

**Part One – Music Matters**

**Pastor's Edition**

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### Just What is This Booklet?

This is a basic study series of the Biblical principles that guide a Christian in their musical choices. It is set forth with the clear conclusion that music is not made up of ever changing preferences and tastes – but rather about strong convictions, strong choices that we are being called to make in this evil day!

The main premise of this study simply is that Music Matters. It matters BOTH to God and the Devil! The Christian who has a true heart for God will seek to know what pleases whom, and will FLEE from anything, including music that even has the appearance of evil.

The author makes no apologies for attempting to degrade the view of modern music by the audience. He intends to mock, and belittle the abuse of God’s people by so many money-hungry entertainers that have latched onto Christians like leaches, and have all but sapped the life-blood of churches today from our true mission of preaching the cross, unvarnished, and unashamed!

This study is unusual because it also attempts to give the audience a better appreciation for the music that we do sing by giving the background to many hymns, and the their authors. Putting a picture to a hymn-writer does wonders to the heart of a singer when he or she knows from what depths of tragedy, such joy and praise sprung forth in our Christian Hymns and conservative Spiritual songs!

Many, many resources have been used to compile the information contained in this booklet. There was no way for this author to make an exhaustive study of Christian Music at this time. But that is not needed today. Christians, know in their heart of hearts that we have sinful tastes and desires in relation to our music, and we know how hard it is to change such an important area of our lives. The Judgment Seat of Christ will reveal just how hard-hearted and how worldly this modern age of “churchianity” truly is. May the fear of God force us to change what we like and enjoy and tolerate.

May the Lord give you the courage to finally and faithfully test your private sacred cow – your own music collection – and see just how far you will go to clean your life and mind from the rubbish that is clearly being used by Satan to corrupt every church in our day.

To go along with this Study, there is a General Handbook, that is a subset of this Instructor’s Booklet with blanks to fill-in, and there are related Microsoft PowerPoint presentations that expand on the information presented herein.

Craig Ledbetter  
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### The Christian’s Conviction about Music:

“I will NOT allow my heart or my mouth to sing the world’s songs, or even Christian songs when they are put to music that carries the same beat, and has exact same sounds of the lost culture of today. I will never transfer to money-hungry entertainers the holy worship that I owe to Christ alone! My Lord deserves all my heart, and all my best, so I will not allow this world to soil it with its seemingly innocent music and lyrics that I now know to be both deceptive, and damaging to my spiritual life. I will instead worship my blessed Saviour and edify others with music and songs that are clearly Biblical in content, and mainly spiritual in emphasis, which means I will mainly sing and memorize Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs.”

## Music Matters

*It Does Matter What Kind of Music a Christian Listens to and Sings*

### I. Some Foundational Scriptures (1 Peter 2:9)

- A. Christians are “peculiar” (strangely different than the world in which they live) in the following ways:
1. In their Spending – we GIVE AWAY our money, instead of hoarding it
  2. In their Praying – we pray not repetitiously, but confidently
  3. In their Music – not worldly music, but music that is pleasing unto God
  4. In their Dress – we dress modestly, not sexy
  5. In their Entertainment – it must be clean and not carnal (fleshly)
  6. A Christian is different that this world in basically EVERY way they live!
  7. Don’t think it unusual that God would transform a believer into someone different than the world around them! It’s all part of what happens when you get born again!
- B. God DOES tell us the kinds of music to listen to and praise Him with...
1. Colossians 3:16 **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”**
  2. Ephesians 5:19 **“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart \_\_\_\_\_”**
- C. God commands us to TEST what we do and like as a believer...
1. 1Thes 5:21,22 **“\_\_\_\_\_ all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all \_\_\_\_\_ of evil.”**
  2. Ephesians 5:10 **“Proving what is \_\_\_\_\_ unto the Lord.”**
  3. Matthew 7:15-20 **“Ye shall know them by their \_\_\_\_\_”**
  4. Luke 12:57 **“Yea, and why even of yourselves \_\_\_\_\_ ye not what is right?”**
  5. 1John 4:1 **“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but \_\_\_\_\_ the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”**
  6. Eph 5:11 **“And have no \_\_\_\_\_ with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.”**
  7. Romans 12:2 **“And be not \_\_\_\_\_ to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”**
  8. 1Cor 6:12 **“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the \_\_\_\_\_ of any.”**
  9. Eccl 7:5 **“It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of \_\_\_\_\_.”**
  10. Psalm 19:14 **“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in \_\_\_\_\_, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”**
- D. Most people will NOT accept God’s limitations on their life-style (1Cor 2:14)
1. The Bible limits a person’s life – why? So that the society in which he lives is safe
  2. Limits on life are **“foolishness”** unto the unsaved person
- E. In This Study, let’s discover the Biblical principles by which we judge the things we enjoy – whether they are right to do, or not.

## II. What We Are Going to Study in this Series

- A. That Music Matters - *It Does Matter What Kind of Music a Christian Listens to and Sings*
- B. True praise is Possible - *Christians Must Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness*
- C. Claiming the Higher Ground - *Satan is Rapidly Destroying Biblical Christianity – Let’s Take the Higher Ground*
- D. How to Take the Higher Ground – *What Christians Must Do to Make the Greatness of Godly Music Known*
- E. Some Final Thoughts – *Using Music Rightly*

## III. A Bit of Christian Music History

- A. What Happened to the “First Music”?
  1. The first songs were in heaven (Job 38:4-7)
  2. Satan was the first Song Leader (Ezek 28:13)
  3. Sin *quieted down* this universe – it now only hums, but does not sing
  4. Righteousness will make this universe sing again (Isa 44:23)
- B. First Century Christian Music (Col 3:16)
  1. The Church began with all three types of singing:
    - a. **PSALMS** - Scripture put to music that affect the soul
    - b. **HYMNS** - Songs in honour of God that affect the life/flesh of the believer
    - c. **SPIRITUAL SONGS** - Songs that affect the spirit
  2. Persecution affected Christianity and reduced singing to a mode of remembering Scripture – putting loads of Scriptures to music
- C. Biblical Church History is divided up also into three time-periods:
  1. **Psalms** were the main type of songs sung until 1300’s
  2. **Hymns** began to be written and sung again 1300’s – 1800’s – this is where almost all of our hymns come from. The word *hymn* derives from Greek *hymnos* "a song of praise"
  3. **Spiritual Songs** were then written again in the early 1800’s – these songs moved into the Hymnal and also became known as hymns
- D. A completely new way of writing and singing Christian songs began in the 1970’s – Contemporary Christian Music (CCM)
  1. Emphasis on the choruses instead of the full hymn
  2. The writing of just short little pieces that are repeated over and over
  3. Emphasis on Women leaders singing instead of men
  4. Hypnotic type of emotional singing instead of rousing (manly) type
  5. “Unknown Tongues” singing
- E. Josh McDowell, who works with teenagers said, "Seventy-five percent of all kids coming to Christ today are not coming to Jesus because He's the way, the truth and the life. They are coming to Christ because He is the best thing that's come along so far, (that they've filtered through their experience.) And as soon as something they think is better comes along, they're gone."
- F. Modern Christian music seeks to attract kids and grown-ups who would not otherwise be interested in the Gospel

## IV. Some Great Hymns to Know

A. **A Mighty Fortress is Our God**, by Martin Luther

- Both the words and music of the hymn are by the Protestant Reformer, Martin Luther (1483-1546).
- Martin Luther, the former Augustinian monk, led the Reformation away from the Church of Rome based upon the battle cry, "The just shall live by Faith" (Romans 1:17), in opposition to the ex cathedra decrees of the Papacy. Luther's confidence in the Power of Faith that comes from the Scriptures, i.e., "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17), was followed closely by his belief that the singing of hymns was most significant in motivating the Believer. He said, "With all my heart I would extol the precious gift of God in the noble art of music... Music is to be praised as second only to the Word of God because by her all the emotions are swayed." It is said that Luther's "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" was sung by many an oppressed Christian as they were forced into exile or brought to their martyrdom.
- "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" (Ein' fest Burg ist unser Gott) quickly became the Battle Hymn of the Reformation. Turning away from a music form dominated by the clergy of the Catholic Church, Luther placed the emphasis upon congregational singing. Hymn books were soon published from the newly introduced printing presses (1450) of Johann Gutenberg (1400-1468). Luther's first hymnal was introduced in 1524 with a total of eight hymns-- half by Luther. He wrote at least 35 hymns.

B. **Count Your Blessings**.

- Words by Johnson Oatman, Jr., 1856-1922
- Music by Edwin O. Excell, 1851-1921
- Rev. Johnson Oatman, Jr., was one of the important and prolific gospel song writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was born near Medford, New Jersey, on April 21, 1856. As a child he became acquainted with the hymns of the church through the singing talents of

**A Mighty Fortress is Our God**

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;  
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing:  
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;  
His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate,  
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing;  
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing:  
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;  
Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same,  
And He must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,  
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us:  
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;  
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,  
One little word shall fell him.

That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;  
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth:  
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;  
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,  
His kingdom is forever.

**Count Your Blessings**

When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,  
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,  
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,  
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.

*Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
Count your blessings, see what God hath done!  
Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.*

Are you ever burdened with a load of care?  
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?  
Count your many blessings, every doubt will fly,  
And you will keep singing as the days go by.  
Refrain

When you look at others with their lands and gold,  
Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold;  
Count your many blessings. Wealth can never buy  
Your reward in heaven, nor your home on high.  
Refrain

So, amid the conflict whether great or small,  
Do not be disheartened, God is over all;  
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,  
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.  
Refrain

his father. At the age of nineteen Oatman joined the Methodist Church and several years later was granted a license to preach in local Methodist congregations. Though he wrote over 5,000 hymn texts, Oatman was busily engaged throughout his life in a mercantile business and later as an administrator for a large insurance company in New Jersey. Other gospel favorites by Johnson Oatman include "Higher Ground", and "No, Not One!"

- "Count Your Blessings" is generally considered to be Oatman's finest hymn. It first appeared in 1897. It has been sung all over the world. One writer has stated, "Like a beam of sunlight it has brightened up the dark places of the earth." Perhaps no American was ever received with such enthusiasm in Great Britain as this hymn. The London Daily, in giving an account of a meeting presided over by Evangelist Gypsy Smith, reported, "Mr. Smith announced the hymn 'Count Your Blessings.' Said he, 'In South London the men sing it, the boys whistle it, and the women rock their babies to sleep on this hymn.'"

C. **Amazing Grace**, by John Newton

- "Amazing Grace" is an autobiographical hymn by John Newton (1725-1807). Formerly a seaman and first officer aboard slave ships, Newton lived a debauched, hardened life until a fearful storm at sea awakened him, and the Mercy and Grace of the LORD Jesus Christ saved him.
- It was in Newton's pivotal year of 1748 on March 21st that he was piloting a ship through a raging storm off the NW coast of Ireland. With nearly two decades of maritime experience behind him, he was well aware that the ship and those aboard were all but lost. Newton began to cry, "Lord have mercy on us!" But, he thought, "What mercy can there be for me?" Nonetheless, he desperately prayed, and God answered. The storm abated. John Newton recorded, "On that day the Lord sent from on high and delivered me from deep waters." He subsequently celebrated that "great deliverance" as the day of his conversion to the LORD Jesus Christ.



**Amazing Grace!**

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found;  
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares,  
I have already come;  
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,  
His Word my hope secures;  
He will my Shield and Portion be,  
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,  
And mortal life shall cease,  
I shall possess, within the veil,  
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,  
The sun forbear to shine;  
But God, Who called me here below,  
Will be forever mine.

When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we'd first begun.



D. **How Great Thou Art**, by Pastor Carl Boberg

1. The Original Swedish lyrics, titled "O, Store Gud" and written in 1886 were inspired by a visit to a beautiful country estate on the southeast coast of Sweden. Pastor Carl Boberg was suddenly caught in a midday thunderstorm with awe inspiring moments of flashing violence, followed by a clear brilliant sun. Soon afterwards he heard the calm sweet songs of the birds in nearby trees. The experience prompted the pastor to fall to his knees in humble adoration of his mighty God. (Osbeck 133) As the result of this experience he wrote a 9 stanza poem, and several years later at a conference, was surprised to hear his poem sung to the tune of an old Swedish folk melody. It was translated into German, then a literal translation by an American in 1925: "O Mighty God, When I behold the Wonder." The song was also translated from German to Russian in 1927. Missionary Stuart Hine, inspired by the Russian words coupled with the awesome sights of the Carpathian mountains, wrote the first three English verses, the fourth came after WW II.
2. The hymn was made famous by George Beverly Shea during a Billy Graham Crusade in London.

V. **What Are Some of YOUR Favourite Hymns and Why?**

- A. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- D. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

VI. **Next Week – True Praise**

**How Great Thou Art**

O Lord my God, When I in awesome wonder,  
 Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made;  
 I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
 Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

*Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
 How great Thou art, How great Thou art.  
 Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
 How great Thou art, How great Thou art!*

When through the woods, and forest glades I wander,  
 And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.  
 When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur  
 And see the brook, and feel the gentle breeze.

*Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
 How great Thou art, How great Thou art.  
 Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
 How great Thou art, How great Thou art!*

And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing;  
 Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;  
 That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing,  
 He bled and died to take away my sin.

*Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
 How great Thou art, How great Thou art.  
 Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
 How great Thou art, How great Thou art!*

When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation,  
 And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart.  
 Then I shall bow, in humble adoration,  
 And then proclaim: "My God, how great Thou art!"

*Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
 How great Thou art, How great Thou art.  
 Then sings my soul, My Saviour God, to Thee,  
 How great Thou art, How great Thou art!*