

often accompanied by backbeat music, the delivery is more sensual and draws attention to the singer. Singing close to a mic adds to this close, intimate, sensual appeal. These styles are **very** common and clearly identify carnal music. They do not honour the Lord.

b. The atmosphere

- 1) Non-carnal, straight music needs no unusual atmosphere to draw attention, because the focus is not on the singer. A reverent, respectful, God-centred atmosphere at church harmonises with godly, natural, straight, edifying music.
- 2) When the atmosphere is dark, dazzling, flashing, eerie, nightclub-type, sensual, or demonic, beware!
- 3) These typical rock concert or a nightclub atmospheres are designed to contribute to the sensual fleshly music and are a sure sign of music that is not spiritual but carnal.

c. The musician's appearance and actions

- 1) The appearance of a musician singing for the Lord's glory will be neat and modest. His or her actions will be non-showy, humble and modest, seeking to glorify the Lord.
- 2) When the musician's actions are showy, immodest, sensual, provocative, or devilish, you may be sure that the music is carnal not spiritual.
- 3) Short skirts, tight clothing, low necklines, other immodest styles, worldly hairstyles, gaudy jewellery, a sensuous, crude, effeminate, wild, or demonic-looking appearance all contribute to carnal music. The musician's appearance is not accidental. It intentionally matches the sound and sometimes the lyrics of the music. No godly Christian should desire to mimic the world like this.

Conclusion: We need God's wisdom to distinguish spiritual music. With His wisdom we must evaluate the music's structure (straight or backbeat), lyrics (true or false), and delivery (natural or breathy, intimate, sensual; wholesome or nightclub atmosphere; modest, God-honouring or immodest, sensual, showy). Hillsong and Bethel music that is common in churches today is not spiritual music. It is carnal.

Play Music Clips:

Song: Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord - 337

The Music of a Spirit-filled Christian

Distinguishing Spiritual Music

10 July 2022 PM – Proverbs 2:1-9 – Music22 – Scott Childs

Introduction: Last week, we learned that the desire to singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is an evidence of being Spirit-filled. We pointed out that spiritual music was opposite to carnal music. Spiritual music honours the Lord; carnal music appeals to the sensual flesh.

Because Satan is a master at transforming into an angel of light (2Co 11:14) and deceiving people (2Ti 3:13), he makes it difficult for us to distinguish spiritual music. Our sinful desires also lead us astray. (James 1:14) "*But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*" Therefore, when it comes to distinguishing between spiritual music and carnal music, we need God's wisdom. Follow along as I read Proverbs 2:1-9. Highlight v.9.

Transition: This evening, I want to give you some tools that, with God's wisdom, will help you distinguish whether a song is spiritual or carnal by its structure, lyrics, and delivery.

1. Distinguish Spiritual Music by its Structure

a. All music consists of melody, harmony, and rhythm

- 1) Melody is the main tune of music.
- 2) Harmony is when one or more notes sound at the same time as the melody to complement it.
- 3) Rhythm is the movement, timing, beat, and pulse that regulate the melody and harmony.

b. Each of these has a natural contribution to music

- 1) **Melody** naturally leads, **harmony** complements, and **rhythm** keeps the pace. When this order is changed, it causes confusion. If harmony dominates, the sound is frustrating. If rhythm dominates, the sound is agitating.
- 2) Melody and harmony are fairly innocent, but rhythm can cause trouble. There are **two main types of rhythm**.
 - a) Non-carnal, straight or natural rhythm. This emphasises the natural beats of a song. Music, secular and sacred, that sounds organised, balanced

and clean will follow a straight rhythm. Marches are often 2|2 time emphasising the 1st beat (e.g., ONE, two, ONE, two). In 3|4 time, the emphasis is on the 1st beat (e.g., ONE, two, three, ONE, two, three). In 4|4 time, the emphasis is on the 1st and 3rd beats (e.g., ONE, two, Three, four, ONE, two, Three, four).

- b) Carnal, backbeat or off beat rhythm. This emphasises the unnatural beats of a song. In 4|4 time, backbeat emphasises the 2nd and 4th beats (e.g., one, TWO, three, FOUR, one, TWO, three, FOUR). “This distinctive [backbeat] rhythmic style emerged in the late nineteen-forties in rhythm and blues recordings and is the backbone of rock and roll music, used today in virtually all pop music.” (John Blanchard and Dan Lucarini, *Can We Rock the Gospel?*, p. 55.) (Read Micky Hart, p. 55)
- 3) Non-carnal, straight rhythm appeals to our spirit, while carnal, backbeat rhythm appeals to our flesh.
 - a) Non-carnal, straight rhythm may stir you to march, or tap your toe. That is not sensual or sinful.
 - b) On the other hand, carnal, backbeat rhythm will stir you to jig, twist, dance, or sway. These are sensual movements. Our flesh likes these sensual movements. Why? Because backbeat rebels against natural rhythm, and as sinners, rebellion is part of our sinful fleshly nature. *Backbeat is wrong even when it is very subtle because it feeds the flesh.*
 - c) Kimberly Smith suggests that we can discern between spiritual and carnal music by ‘listening’ with our *bodies*, as well as our ears. Oh, be Careful Little Ears, p.39 If the music encourages your body (torso) to respond with improper hip-swaying, body-jerking movements it is carnal not spiritual.
 - d) Read quotes from “Can We Rock the Gospel?” p. 115.

2. Distinguish Spiritual Music by its Lyrics

a. Lyrics or words of a song portray a message

- 1) The words of music may praise God or curse him. They may promote virtue or vice. They may be bad or good,

shallow or full of meaning, doctrinally wrong or biblical, degrading or edifying, rebellious or patriotic, filthy or clean, godly or blasphemous. Because the words of music embed in our minds and in our hearts, bad lyrics are very harmful.

- 2) God tells us that the content of our hearts will affect our actions. (Proverbs 4:23) “*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*”
- 3) The words that we sing also reveal the content of our heart. (Luke 6:45) “*. . . of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.*”
- 4) Ask yourself, “What are the words saying?” If the words of your music are to please God, they must meet God’s standards, even if the song is not a Christian song.
 - a) They must be doctrinally correct. (Titus 2:1) “*But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:*” (Cf., Col 3:16).
 - b) They must not be corrupt. (Ephesians 4:29) “*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*”

b. Lyrics must match the sound

- 1) Rebellious words do not fit with a gentle tune. Mournful words do not fit with a lively march. Godly words do not fit with fleshly music, thus CCM gives a conflicting message.
- 2) The sound of music sends a clear message. The words also send a clear message. Both messages must agree, or the result is contradictory.

3. Distinguish Spiritual Music by its Delivery

By delivery, we are talking about the presentation.

a. The singing style

- 1) Singing naturally or straight draws no attention to the singer, but focuses on the song. If it is a Christian song, all the attention is pointed to the Lord, not the singer. This style has no sensual appeal.
- 2) However, when the singer uses scooping (up to a note), sliding (down from a note), showiness, or breathy singing,