

WHY WE SING AND DO NOT PLAY

Introduction:

1. Christians need to be reminded of fundamental truths (2 Peter 1:12).
2. The truth about fundamental matters needs to be taught to the world (John 8:32)!
3. "Why don't you use instrumental music in worship to God?"
4. How should one respond? How would you respond?

Text: Colossians 3:16-17

I. Is Biblical Authority Essential for Worship?

- A. To do something "in the name of the Lord" is to do it by His authority.
 1. Thayer stated that this phrase meant: "To do a thing... by one's command and authority, acting on his behalf, promoting his cause...."
 2. He added: "Relying or resting on the name of Christ, rooted (so to speak) in his name, i.e. mindful of Christ."
- B. Authority always equals permission.
 1. The Greek word for "authority" (εξουσία - *exousia*) comes from a verb that means, "It is lawful" (*exesi*).
 2. If one has authority to do something, then he has permission to do it – it is permitted.
 3. If one does not have authority to do something, then it is not permitted.
- C. Thus, to worship God acceptably, one must perform only those things he has permission (authority) from God to do.
- D. Following the commandments of men produces vain worship (Matthew 15:7-9).
- E. Following the religions of men produces ignorant worship (John 4:19-24).
- F. Listening to the opinions of men produces faithless worship (Romans 10:17).
- G. This explains the origin of the statement coined by Thomas Campbell: "Where the scriptures speak, we speak; where they are silent, we are silent."

II. Is There Biblical Authority for Singing in Worship?

- A. Without a doubt (and without opposition) the New Testament authorizes singing in worship to God.
- B. Jesus and the apostles sang hymns (Matthew 26:30).
- C. Paul and Silas sang praises to God (Acts 16:25).
- D. The church was commanded to sing with understanding (1 Corinthians 14:15).
- E. The church was instructed to sing with words from the heart (Ephesians 5:19).
- F. The church was directed to teach and admonish one another by singing (Colossians 3:16).
- G. Christians express their joy by singing (James 5:13).
- H. Clearly, God gives permission for His children to sing in worship!

III. Is There Biblical Authority for Playing Musical Instruments in Worship?

- A. The simple but powerful answer is, “No.”
 - 1. Where are the verses like those listed above that speak of or authorize mechanical instruments of music in worship?
 - 2. Moses Lard wrote: “Did Christ ever appoint it? Did the apostles ever sanction it? Or did any of the primitive churches ever use it? Never. In what light the must we view him who attempts to introduce it into the churches of Christ of the present day? I answer, as an insulter of the authority of Christ, and as a defiant and impious innovator in the simplicity and purity of ancient worship” (1952).
- B. Some argue: “But it doesn’t say that we can’t use them.”
 - 1. Because of the authority principle, this does not have to be stated.
 - 2. The New Testament does not say that we can’t use cookies and sweet tea in observing the Lord’s Supper.
 - 3. By authorizing unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine, all other kinds of food and drink are disallowed – there is no permission for them.
 - 4. The example of Nadab and Abihu offering “strange fire” to God must be remembered (cf. Leviticus 10:1-3).
- C. Some argue: “But instrumental music was used in Old Testament worship.”
 - 1. This is true; however, we do not live under the Old Testament.
 - 2. Consider that the book of Psalms is referenced some 414 times in the New Testament.
 - 3. It is quoted directly at least 55 times in the New Testament.
 - 4. Yet, there is no quotation from the Psalms in the New Testament that includes a reference to instrumental music.
- D. If God wanted to authorize instrumental music in New Testament, He could have done so easily.
- E. Yet He only authorized singing.

Conclusion:

- 1. G. C. Brewer wrote: “Either show where there is New Testament authority for the use of instruments or show why New Testament authority is not needed.”
- 2. We must offer to God in worship only that which He has asked and authorized us to do.
- 3. Personal feeling, the opinions or men, and the teachings of religious leaders cannot alter the authority of God.

- Adapted from an article by Mel Futrell