

# Student Study Guides

These student study guides may be duplicated and distributed to students of a class or group study. Students should use these guides as they read each chapter, answering each discussion questions as they read. These same questions are printed in the teacher's guide, so if the students have used these guides, they will be prepared for discussion during the class or group study.



# Chapter 1: Does Music Matter?

## Chapter Motivation

This chapter sets the tone for the entire study. If Christians don't see the importance of music for the Christian life or the glory of God, then they won't have open minds and hearts to listen to principles set forth in the book. This chapter demonstrates the biblical importance of music.

## Memory Verse

*Ephesians 5:19*

“Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart” (ESV).

## Introduction (p. 5)

Do you think that music matters? Do you think God cares what kind of music you listen to at home? Do you think God cares about the music that is used in church? How has a kind of thinking that says that music doesn't matter influenced secular society today? How has it influenced Christian practice?

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## Music Matters Scripturally (pp. 6—13)

### *Music In Worship (pp. 6—9)*

Why do you suppose God gave such specific instructions to Temple musicians? Do we place as important an emphasis upon the qualifications for worship musicians today as the Israelites did? Should we place as much emphasis on that as they did? Do you think principles from some of the commands to Temple musicians should be carried over for New Testament Church musicians?

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Does the connection of music with worship in the Bible provide adequate proof that music is important to God? How does such a connection impact the kinds of choices we make for worship music?

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*Music and Truth (pp. 9–10)*

What is it about music that makes it such a wonderful vehicle for communicating God’s truth? How does truth presented in song differ from truth presented through speaking? Drama? Books?

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*Music and Emotion (p. 11)*

Have you ever had your emotions changed by music? Was that change positive or negative? Have you ever used a song to express a sentiment that you couldn’t find words to express?

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Why do you think certain styles of music are always associated with sinful lifestyles and practices? Is there something about the emotional expression that automatically promotes those associations?

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*Music and Beauty (p. 12)*

Define God's glory.

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Have you ever connected the idea of God's glory with our modern concept of beauty? In what ways does creation "declare the glory of God" and make God's "invisible attributes" known?

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**Music Matters Historically (pp. 13—17)**

How important is church history to you? What do pastors and theologians of the past contribute to this question of whether music matters?

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*Basil of Caesarea (p. 13)*

What are the primary benefits of music (psalms) according to Basil of Caesarea?

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*Ambrose (p. 14)*

How does Ambrose highlight both the horizontal and vertical benefits of music?

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*John Chrysostom (p. 14)*

What are some ways that music could “harm” or “ruin” as John Chrysostom suggests? What are characteristics of music that would cause such effects?

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*Augustine (p. 15)*

How does Augustine say that music can give expression to affections that cannot be spoken. We’ll discuss this more thoroughly in Chapter 3.

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*Martin Luther (p. 15)*

What do you think Luther meant by “properly used”? How can we be made “better and stronger in faith” by music?

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*John Calvin (p. 16)*

How can music help us to “invoke and praise God with more vehement and ardent zeal”?

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What characteristics would make a song “light” or “frivolous”?

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What are differences between “music which one makes to entertain men” and music “sung in the Church”?

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How can we “abuse” God’s gift of music?

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*Jonathan Edwards (p. 17)*

What do you think Edwards meant by “sweet concord of mind”?

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*Conclusion (p. 17)*

Why do you think people have begun to assume that music is unimportant in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries?

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## Chapter Review

Does music matter? How much does music matter? In what ways does it matter?

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Do our secular music choices matter as much as our sacred choices? In what ways?

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In what ways has your thinking been changed because of this chapter?

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What issues in this chapter do you hope to get a better grasp of in the remainder of the book?

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# Chapter 2: Is the Bible Enough?

## Chapter Motivation

Many people today insist that since the Bible does not discuss musical style at any length, then it must be unimportant to God. This chapter explains that a correct understanding of the sufficiency of Scripture demands that a Christian must submit all of his choices to the authority and profitability of God’s Word.

## Memory Verse

*2 Timothy 3:16–17*

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (ESV).

## Introduction (p. 19)

What is your authority when it comes to making musical choices?

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Do you think God has given us any instruction in the Bible for making musical choices that please him?

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How much do you think we can/should use extra-biblical sources of information as we make ethical decisions, including our musical choices?

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## The Bible is Sufficient (pp. 20–32)

What do you think the sufficiency of Scripture means? Do you believe that God has given us everything we need in his Word?

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*The Bible Is Sufficient for Salvation (p. 21)*

Do we need anything beside the Word of God to lead us to salvation? Can anyone be saved apart from the Word of God?

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*The Bible Is Sufficient for Sanctification (pp. 22–24)*

Are you committed to daily, progressive sanctification, aided by the Holy Spirit through his Word? Do you think your musical choices are part of sanctification?

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What do you think “perfectly equipped” implies?

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Why does the inspiration of Scripture imply the inerrancy and authority of Scripture? How can we practically deny the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of the Bible by how we live?

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What kinds of things in your life is the Bible sufficient to inform and instruct? What kinds of things in your life do you sometimes wonder if the Bible is really enough?

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Do you really believe that the Bible is enough to help you make all of the choices in your life? Discuss the challenges to being confident in this truth.

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*What the Sufficiency of Scripture Does Not Mean (pp. 25–32)*

What are some contemporary situations that are not explicitly addressed in Scripture? Does the fact that something is not directly addressed mean that it is not important to God?

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What are ways in which the Bible could be viewed as a list or encyclopedia of prohibitions? Have you ever heard people talk about biblical application in this way?

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What are some acts that are not directly mentioned in Galatians 5:19–21 but are “like” those in the list.

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Summarize the two different ways of interpreting Sola Scriptura, and consider which one really limits the profitability of the Bible.

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How can Christians train their “powers of discernment”? What are some ways they can “practice to distinguish good from evil”?

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What are some extrabiblical sources of information that may be helpful in discerning how a Christian should live? What are some extrabiblical tools that could help a Christian make God-pleasing musical decisions?

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Consider the issue of abortion. Is it directly condemned in Scripture? What are some evidences in the Bible that prove that abortion is sin?

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Consider the recreational use of cocaine. What are some principles in the Bible that would rightly lead a Christian to believe that such practice is sin? Do you need any extra-biblical information to arrive at that conclusion?

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**Training in Application (pp. 32—36)**

Do you find yourself sometimes lazy when it comes to pursuing godliness and pursuing things that are excellent? What can you do practically to prevent this?

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Choose several contemporary issues and use the three step process of biblical application listed above to arrive at biblical conclusions.

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Are you willing to work in order to understand all of the important issues related to music and worship so that you can make God-pleasing decisions in this area?

**Applying the Bible to Musical Choices (pp. 36—37)**

We will discuss this more fully in Chapter 4, but begin to consider some biblical principles that may have bearing upon musical choices.

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If an extrabiblical source of information contradicts the Bible, which source of authority wins? Consider some scenarios where this might happen.

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### Chapter Review

Is the Bible really enough to help us make God-pleasing musical choices?

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What principles in Scripture should we apply to our musical choices?

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What other sources of information might help us make good choices?

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# Chapter 3: Why Do We Sing in Church?

## Chapter Motivation

Most Christians today limit the benefit of music to its power to accompany truth. While this is certainly an important benefit (see Chapter 1), music has a far more important role in worship.

## Memory Verse

*Colossians 3:16*  
“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (NASB).

## Introduction (p. 39—40)

How would you define worship? Why do you think we sing in church?

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What are some ways in which an understanding of music in church as only accompaniment for truth might influence philosophy and musical choices? Could such thinking influence a church to make bad decisions?

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## What is Worship? (pp. 40—49)

How has worship changed from the Old Testament to the New? What are some similarities? Does this have implications for the essence of what worship is?

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*Worship In Truth (pp. 42–44)*

Notice how God rejects creative worship in Exodus 32:1–10, Leviticus 10:1–3, and Matthew 15:8–9.

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What are some elements that churches have introduced into their worship that are not prescribed in the Word of God? Explain how such introductions contradict worship in truth.

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Explain why the content of our church music is so important. Name and evaluate some sacred songs that have weak doctrinal content.

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Name and evaluate some popular Christian songs that actually contradict biblical doctrine in their lyrics.

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*Worship In Spirit (pp. 44–47)*

What do you think of when you hear the term, “emotion”? What do you think of when you hear the term, “affections”?

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Explain the difference between feelings that may accompany affections and feelings that are simply artificially stimulated. What are some common ways to stimulate feelings? How might personality affect a person’s feelings?

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Choose an affection and list a variety of feelings that may accompany it.

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Have you ever thought in your heart, “I just don’t feel like I’m worshipping,” or “I need that song or that ceremony or that element in a service in order to feel like I’m really worshipping”? Why does there seem to be a temptation to define spiritual experiences such as worship by some kind of physical criteria in most people’s experiences?

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*Facilitating Worship in Spirit and Truth (pp. 48—49)*

What are different elements in a worship service that facilitate worship in truth?

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Discuss various life circumstances in which words are inadequate to express what is happening in the heart.

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**The Language of our Spirits (pp. 49—53)**

*Expressing our Spirits (50—51)*

Consider how music expresses the heart. List some other passages of Scripture that emphasize the heart focus and power of music.

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How can instrumental music without words express different kinds of emotion? Name some instrumental music that expresses joy, love, peace, or excitement.

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Name five songs that express joy, and discuss how they express different kinds of joy.

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*Teaching our Spirits (52—53)*

List some ways people exhibit wrong emotions. List some ways that Christians exhibit unsanctified emotions.

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What are you allowing in your life to shape your affections? Are you filling your life with things that debase your affections or things that ennoble them?

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What kinds of music might harm a person's affections? What kinds of music might help them?

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**Conclusion (pp. 54—55)**

Consider the implications listed in the conclusion. Do you have to adjust your thinking to match any of them? Are there areas where you can adjust your practice to apply some of them?

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What kinds of music are inappropriate for church because they express emotions that are inappropriate to direct toward God?

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## Chapter Review

Define worship biblically.

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What are the primary purposes of music for worship?

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How can music express our hearts?

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How can music sanctify our emotions?

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What kind of music is inappropriate for worship?

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What kind of music is inappropriate for Christians at any time?

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# Chapter 4: How Can We Evaluate Musical Communication?

## Chapter Motivation

Christians may admit that they need to be discerning with their musical choices, but determining what music communicates and rightly applying the Bible to those choices is not always simple. This chapter aims at simply explaining how to apply the Bible to music.

## Memory Verse

*Ephesians 4:29*

“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear” (ESV).

## Introduction (p. 57)

Do you have a difficult time discerning what various songs and style communicate? Consider some of the various reasons discerning musical meaning can be difficult.

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## Musical Communication in the Bible (pp. 57—61)

### *Worship that Sounds Like War (pp. 58)*

What are similarities between sounds associated with war and sounds associated with pagan worship rituals? What musical elements may have been part of this music that would have reflected these similar sounds? What kinds of music today might sound like war or pagan worship to average ears?

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### *Refreshing the Spirit (pp. 59—60)*

How can music be used to soothe troubled emotions? What musical elements could be used to soothe a troubled emotional state? What kinds of music today would soothe the soul?

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*Instrumental Emotion (pp. 60—61)*

**Emotional Metaphor (pp. 61—68)**

*Conventional Association (62—63)*

List several conventional associations with music in our culture. How might conventional associations differ from person to person or culture to culture? How might conventional associations change over time?

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*Natural Association (pp. 63—68)*

What are some ways in which you can discern the emotional state of a person even if he has not told you? What are some ways in which animals and other non-human objects can be described using emotional language? Why is this possible?

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What are some similarities between how gestures, facial expression, and body movements communicate and how music communicates? What are various features of a song that could communicate emotions similarly to how facial features, tone of voice, or body gestures can?

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How might natural and conventional meaning contradict one another?

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Choose two songs (one sacred, one secular) and evaluate each of them on three levels: lyrics, conventional associations, and natural associations.

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**Evaluating Musical Communication (pp. 68—80)**

What are some challenges to exactly pinpointing what a particular song or style is communicating? Does the difficulty of discerning musical meaning negate the responsibility to do so? Name some other areas in the Christian life that are difficult but necessary.

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***Corrupt Communication (pp. 69—71)***

List song songs whose lyrics may not seem corrupt at first, but after carefully comparing them with Scripture most likely are corrupt. Are there any songs that you enjoy whose lyrics contain corrupt communication?

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Why is listening to music that expresses corrupt communication a tacit approval of the connected sins? How can listening to corrupt music harm you?

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Name and discuss some songs or styles of music that are very likely always inappropriate for Christian use. What do they express? How do they express it? Why is it always inappropriate?

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*Edifying Communication (pp. 72—73)*

What are some kinds of music that may be permissible but are not actually spiritually beneficial?

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*Fitting Communication (pp. 74—76)*

Discuss what makes a song fitting for the following occasions:

- a wedding
- a funeral
- a coronation
- a cookout
- a football game
- a church service
- personal worship

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How might various cultural expressions, including music, affect the message they are trying to carry?

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What are some activities that you have freedom to do, but it may be wise to abstain from it since it could cause someone weaker than you to stumble?

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What kinds of conventional associations might cause an otherwise good song or style to be a stumbling block for some Christians?

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**Conclusion (pp. 80—81)**

Using the chart on page 80, name a scenario and list some activities that would fit into each box for that scenario:

- Corrupt; avoid at all times
- Edifying, but unfitting for this occasion
- Edifying and fitting, but with a harmful association
- Edifying, fitting, and positive associations

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Now choose some scenarios and list some music that would fit into each box in the chart.

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## Chapter Review

How does music communicate by conventional associations?

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How does music communicate by natural association?

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How can music communicate corrupt messages?

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How can music communicate edifying messages?

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How might some music be unfitting for a particular circumstance?

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How might otherwise good music be a stumbling block?

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# Chapter 5: Is Beauty in the Eye of the Beholder?

## Chapter Motivation

Because of rampant relativism today, most people (including Christians) assume that beauty is simply subjective. As Christians, we must root ourselves in the objective source of all things, including beauty – God himself.

## Memory Verse

*Philippians 4:8*  
“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (ESV).

## Introduction (pp. 83–85)

Define beauty.

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Do you take pleasure in beautiful objects? What kind of pleasure is it? Is it that same kind of pleasure you take in people? Is it the same kind of pleasure you take in a practical tool?

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What are some synonyms for beauty? Are any of these used in Scripture to describe God?

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**The Source of Beauty (pp. 85—91)**

*The Beauty of God (pp. 85—88)*

Why is taking pleasure in God necessary in order to glorify him? Why is serving God merely out of duty not enough?

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Consider God’s glory. How is it like our concept of beauty?

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Consider the kind of pleasure we take in God’s perfections. How does this pleasure magnify those perfections?

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What are some implications of the fact that God is the source of all beauty? What does this mean for other objects of beauty or the criteria with which we may judge beauty?

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*The Beauty of Creation (pp. 88–90)*

How can creation be considered beautiful when compared to the beauty of God? What are some qualities of beauty found in creation that reflect God's beauty?

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*Qualities of Beauty (pp. 90–91)*

Name some objects that are typically considered beautiful in our society and apply the criteria of order, proportion, and radiance to them. Are they truly beautiful when compared to God?

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Do the same exercise with various styles of music.

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Understanding beauty to be something objectively based upon the beauty of God, explain how taste is not merely subjective. What would make objectively bad taste. What about good taste?

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**The Marring of Beauty (pp. 91—93)**

What is the nature of human depravity and what is its impact upon our ability to (a) take ultimate pleasure in the beauty of God and (b) correctly judge true beauty?

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**The Redemption of Beauty (pp. 93—97)**

*Velled Beauty (pp. 94—95)*

How does depravity prevent people from recognizing the beauty of Christ in the gospel? What is their only hope?

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Why is it that we only submit to things when we recognize their value and set our affections upon them? What is the ultimate reason, then, that people reject the gospel?

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What is the only way that a person's ability to recognize the beauty and value of the gospel can be restored?

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*Revealed Beauty (pp. 95—97)*

Discuss the implications of the fact that the Holy Spirit has regenerated a believer's heart and given him the ability to apprehend the beauty of God. What does this mean for a believer's ability to apprehend other forms of beauty?

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**The Judgment of Beauty (pp. 98—100)**

Why is it important to discern what is truly beautiful?

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How might the work of applying Philippians 4:8 to every area of a Christian's life be a difficult task sometimes? Are you willing to work at applying passages like Philippians 4:8 to your musical choices?

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What are some areas of belief that you have had to adjust to match with reality?

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What are some areas of living that you have had to adjust to match what is really good?

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What are some things that you have considered beautiful that you may have to adjust to match what truly is beautiful?

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### Change Your Taste (pp. 101—102)

What are some things in your life that you enjoy simply because you are used to them, not necessarily because they are worthy of enjoying?

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What are some songs or styles of music that you enjoy, not because they are really worthy of enjoying, but simply because you have become accustomed to them?

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### Chapter Review

Define beauty.

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Define God's glory.

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What is the connection between God's glory and beauty?

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How may other things may be compared to God and determined to be beautiful?

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Describe a Christian's responsibility to change his tastes.

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# Chapter 6: How Should We Think About Sunday Morning?

## Chapter Motivation

Most churches today unfortunately put little or no thought and effort into planning their corporate worship services. This problem exists for a number of reasons, some of which are addressed in this chapter. The chapter concludes with practical suggestions for making corporate worship most beneficial.

## Memory Verse

*Psalm 118:21–24*

“I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. <sup>22</sup>The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. <sup>23</sup>This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. <sup>24</sup>This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (ESV)

## Introduction (p. 103)

What do you consider the primary purpose your church gathers on Sunday?

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How much do you prepare during the week for your church’s Sunday morning service?

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## The Purpose of Corporate Worship (104–115)

Have you ever heard anyone argue that churches do not gather to worship? What do you think about such an argument?

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Have you every considered the importance of corporate worship? Have you ever heard someone says, “I can worship just as well by myself?” What do you think about such a statement?

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*The Day Belonging to the Lord (104—107)*

Do you consider Sunday to be a special day set apart from the other six days of the week? What are the implications of understanding the first day of the week to be special in God's sight?

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What is the importance of the fact that the first day of the week is a day especially belonging to the Lord?

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What are some areas in your thinking or living that you may need to change so as to dedicate Sunday to the Lord?

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*The Command to Worship Corporately (p. 108)*

What are various ways that corporate worship is different than individual, private worship?

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What are implications of the fact that churches must gather for corporate worship?

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*The Examples of Corporate Worship (pp. 109—113)*

Do you crave Scriptural teaching? Are you devoted to it? How is devotion to Scriptural teaching an essential component of corporate worship?

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Do you see Christian fellowship as more significant and more important than the friendships unbelievers enjoy? How is biblical fellowship a sharing in a common spiritual bond in Jesus Christ?

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What is the significance and importance of the Lord's Supper? What are some ways in which observance of the Lord's Supper could be improved to manifest its importance?

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Do you consider corporate prayer as important? What are some ways a church could conduct corporate prayer to help its congregation recognize its importance?

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*The Terms for Corporate Worship (pp. 114—115)*

Why does the worship language used in the New Testament to describe the church imply that churches assemble to worship?

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What are some ways that your thinking and practice may need to change in light of the fact that the first day of the week belongs to the Lord in a special way and that the Bible expects churches to gather on his day for corporate worship?

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### The Preparation for Corporate Worship (pp. 115—119)

Do you always feel rushed and ill-prepared for worship on Sunday mornings? List some areas where you may need to be better prepared for Sunday.

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#### *Preparation Begins Monday Morning (p. 117)*

What are some practical things you can do to prepare during the week for corporate worship?

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#### *Preparation Intensifies Saturday Evening (pp. 117—118)*

What are some practical things that you can do on Saturday evening so that you will be adequately prepared for the Lord's Day?

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#### *Preparation Culminates Sunday Morning (pp. 118—119)*

### The Participation in Corporate Worship (pp. 119—124)

#### *Singing (pp. 119—120)*

What are some practical things that you can do to make sure that you are fully engaged during the congregational singing in your church?

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*Offerings (p. 120)*

What are some practical things that you can do to give more meaning to giving in your church?

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*Prayer (p. 121)*

What are some practical things that you can do to have an active heart and mind during corporate prayer in your church?

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*Special Music (pp. 121–123)*

What are some practical things that you can do to actively participate during prepared musical offerings in your church?

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*Silence (p. 123)*

What can you do during silences in your church services to make the service more beneficial?

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*Preaching (pp. 123–124)*

What are some practical things that you can do to have an active heart and mind during the preaching of your church?

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**Conclusion (p. 124)**

What does worshipping with “reverence and awe” imply for our corporate worship?

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What significance for worship is it that God is a “consuming fire”?

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**Looking Back**

Explain why the first day of the week should be significant for a Christian.

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Explain why churches must gather for corporate worship.

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What principles should govern corporate worship?

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What are some practical ways you can prepare for and actively participate in corporate worship?\

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**MUSIC IS EVERYWHERE.** This is a book about making musical choices. But not just any choices. This is a book about making musical choices that are deliberately informed by the Word of God. It is about making choices that are discerning, wise, beneficial, and edifying. This book is about making musical choices that will bring glory to God.

Six brief, engaging chapters will help you answer the most significant questions influencing our musical choices today:

Does music matter?

Is the Bible enough?

Why do we sing in church?

How should we evaluate musical communication?

Is beauty in the eye of the beholder?

How should we think about Sunday morning?

**SCOTT ANIOL** is the executive director of Religious Affections Ministries, a ministry committed to helping churches think biblically about worship. Scott travels the country speaking in churches, colleges, seminaries, and conferences on the topics of music and worship, and he is also the author of *Worship in Song: A Biblical Approach to Music and Worship* (BMH Books, 2009).

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