

The song was beautiful. . . . powerful captivating.

I was drawn in by the poetry, truth and compelling melody. The arrangement was magnificent as well; the producer had chosen creative and interesting sounds to awaken my aural senses. As I was enjoying the song, this ‘God’ question popped into my head.

Is God enjoying this song the same way I am?

Is the beauty of this singer’s voice enough to bring delight to the heart of God?

Maybe we need to step back and ask a bigger question; does God get delight from music? He must – He created it! Does God love creativity? How could a Creator not love our expressions of creativity? He delights in our songs . . He loves all our expressions of creativity . . . **until** we are using those expressions of creativity to fake how we are really doing . . . **until** we are hiding behind our songs, even our songs of praise. A few fig leaves woven together, though creative and beautiful . . were a sign that Adam & Eve were hiding who they really were from their Maker.

The truth is humbling. The truth is revealing.

God does not need our music and our creative expressions of art to communicate truth or love. All of creation (even it’s fallen state) does a pretty amazing job of that already!

(Psalm 19: 1- 3 “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.)

So what does God need from us? What does he love to hear in our music?

When we hear recorded music, it’s limited hearing. We don’t ‘hear’ the life of the musician or songwriter. And musically, all the ‘out of tune’ notes and mistakes have been edited out. Or to think about it another way, through our culture’s fascination with film and photography, we have started to see life through the lens; now we often see only what’s within the frame. Outside of the frame and behind the facade and props built for the film set or photo shoot, it’s often not a pretty picture. For sure, the stuff outside of the frame is not the part of the picture that we let others see. But it’s at this point that there is a big difference between God and us.

We hear and see in part.

But God doesn’t watch a film and see only what’s in the frame. God doesn’t hear a song and hear only what the producer wants Him to hear. He sees everything He hears everything; everything we say and think. God takes delight when the whole of our life; everything he hears and sees is an expression of love to him. If we are walking in unfaithfulness or lack of love, he is not impressed with our music, no matter how grand or beautiful it sounds to our ears.

Remember the warning in Amos?

Amos 5: 23,24 Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

The issue is not the music; God loves music (There are way more commands to ‘sing a new song’ in scripture than to ‘stop the music’). The answer is not to shut down creativity; religion has tried that many times and failed. If you are anything like me, you have ‘God-encounters’ as you get creative! Our calling as musicians and singers is to love God with our whole lives . . .and flee our culture’s propensity to building facades that have no substance behind them. We live among a people that love to weave fig leaves together, hide behind them and call it art. God loves all art (including the beauty of a fig leaf) but he does not delight in beauty that is not matched to a life of love.

The question is this: do our **lives** reflect the beauty, love and justice of God? That’s a tough question to answer honestly. I wish the question was this instead: does our music reflect the beauty, love and justice of God? Answering that affirmatively can be done a whole lot easier than our lives matching the words of our songs.

Jesus put this match together; he matched ‘loving God’ with ‘loving your neighbor’. Our closest neighbors; our spouses, children, co-workers and friends need to see and hear that the words of our songs are being lived out off the stage and outside of the frame. Then the songs that powerfully move us will also move the heart of God. And that’s the dream and vision of a life with eternal reward – bringing delight to the heart of God.

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