

# WORSHIP MUSIC

“Some of the most popular worship songs that you’re probably listening to right now more than likely should be considered for removal from the worship playlist,”

Jesus’ conversation with the woman at the well in [John 4](#) explains four principles for godly worship and with this in mind I suggest we be very cautious when consuming music associated with [Bethel](#), [Hillsong](#) and [Elevation](#), and whilst we see such entities as not reflecting God’s word (prosperity, salvation by works, or unacceptable corporate practices) we shouldn’t condone such entities, including music sourced from them for worship, as it is really an endorsement of them and all that they stand for.

Setting up the scenario for Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman in John 4, he spent most of his time looking at verses 21-24, which says:

*“Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”*

**The first principle** drawn from the text is that “worship is **not about a place**. It’s about a person and a heartfelt relationship.”

“If you want to have spirit-filled worship with God, it’s more about how much you know about God, that’s going to affect how you worship him. Worship is not about being in church on Sunday but is “a way of life.” It is about knowing God and his character; the more we know him, the deeper our worship of him will be.

We also need to be very cautious about what we call “**worshiping in the spirit**” – It’s not about falling down under the direction of a Charismatic Preacher or babbling in a language that even the speaker doesn’t understand. It’s about walking every moment with the spirit of God guiding and our seeking out that guidance in everything we do.

**Second**, “worship must be **rooted in truth**.”

“It is impossible for you and I to worship God when the music that we are listening to is untrue, because basically **what we’re doing is, singing lies to God**. We’re singing lies about God to God, hoping that God will receive that message when what we are saying to him is not even consistent with who he is.”

Some specific **examples** are:

from a song by Brandon Lake & Bethel Music called “Too Good Not to Believe”

*We’ve seen cancer disappear*

*We’ve seen broken bodies healed*

*Don’t you tell me he can’t do it*

*Don’t you tell me he can’t do it*

We know God can do it, but this goes on to promote an expectation that we, or those in our care, will be healed (this is not asking, it is demanding and testing God).

*Another is Champion by Dante Bowe and Bethel Music*

*“when I open up my mouth, miracles start breaking out”*

(Do you believe that you can create a miracle with your mouth, that you can speak things into existence just by speech). Nowhere is the Glory given back to God.

**The issue isn't about miraculous healing occurring**, but rather that many of these groups underwriting these songs are of the 'word of faith movement' and particularly Bethel, Hillsong, Bethel, and Elevation.

Colossians 3:16 gives required guidance for worship songs and praise: Teaching and admonishing in song with grace in our hearts to the Lord

- Is our music the word of Christ?, or
- What does it teach to each other as we sing? Or
- Is it Glorifying God or is it about how we are doing?
- How about heartfelt thanks and Praise?

Because of their theological position, they, Hillsong, Bethel, and Elevation are **subtly infiltrating their theological positions** into their music without the realisation of those doing the song selection.

It is an imperative that **those who choose the music** for worship, investigate the content for scriptural integrity (worship must be **God centred**, whereas much of the music from Bethel, Hillsong and Elevate are **man/self centred**), as well as the corporate ethics of the source.

Our Worship inclusive of our Worship Music **must focus upon God** rather than who we are or what we can do. Worship music is the teaching of the listener, something about the attributes of our God.

Again I urge caution that for any worship team to utilise music from such sources in Worship is in effect **providing their Church support and endorsement** of these groups by: displaying the copywrite information at the song footer, paying the royalty fees, and even encouraging by the acceptance of these songs that members of the congregation purchase such music for their own collections.

We hear responses like: we want to encourage introducing new music that is easy for the congregation to sing and for the musicians to play - whilst this sounds good, that shouldn't be a primary consideration at all and if done, it needs to be done with caution. There really are alternatives without compromising our Church ethics. An example is how our music team has decided to use "the Creed by Hillsong" in our services when Emu Music as well as Sovereign Grace and Stuart Townsend provide viable modern alternatives.

There is also a great library of older material that shouldn't be discarded simply because it's old! When was the last time you sung "What a friend we have in Jesus" or "Oh Jesus I have promised". A number of these great old Hymns have actually been modernised re language and/or melody.

I really feel somewhat disheartened discouraged and compromised when at the end of a song that I have sung to see a copywrite notice declaring Hillsong or Bethel or Elevation in the CCL script.

As defined in Romans 14:14 & 14:23, for us who believe supporting these entities would be wrong, we are bound to refrain from doing it. For those who don't feel that same way, then we leave that to their individual discernment. So we're not dictating that others who don't have an issue change, simply that we who believe this to be wrong cannot partake.

