



Scripture & Song

A Four-Week Daily Devotional Guide

- What the Bible teaches about music
- How to read music and play the piano
- Helps for songleading and hymnplaying

By James and Suzanne Hood

*I will praise thee with uprightness of heart,
when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.*

~ Psalm 119:7 ~

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* These items were not completed at the time of this *first printing*, but they are available if you contact us. You can receive them by mail, e-mail, or as “PDF” downloads from www.scriptureandsong.org.

Preface – *Decide for Yourself!*

Those who have trusted Christ alone for salvation have the privilege of being called “Christians.” With that privileged title comes the tools for “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (II Peter 1:3). Through the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit; we understand His “exceeding great and precious promises” (v. 4). The Holy Spirit actually resides within us, making this understanding possible! Because we have this spiritual equipment, we *can* and *must* make wise decisions.

In the area of music, the Holy Spirit can help us know God’s will in our listening, singing, and playing. The Holy Spirit always works through God’s Word. We do not necessarily need the “words of man’s wisdom” (I Cor. 2:4-5). We just need to know what God has already revealed to us in His Word and prayerfully obey It. *This book is a guide to help you know and do God’s will in music.* It gives both Biblical philosophy and practical teaching on music.

If we want to please God, we must be willing to obey His Word.

Many Bible scholars and musicians have written much about music, and much of this material is helpful. In fact, we have included notes from various sources throughout the study. We have also compiled a list of helpful resources; it is available on our Web site (www.scriptureandsong.org). In the end, however, we must be brought face-to-face with what God says, and we must choose to obey His Word and His Holy Spirit.

Our prayer is that this four-week devotional guide will give you the knowledge you need to make Biblical choices in the area of music. May God through His Holy Spirit give you the wisdom to answer your own questions about music, and may the Lord give you the grace to faithfully obey Him.

As you progress through this study, please pray that the Lord will do these things:

Give you discernment

Help you to understand the Bible and music

Strengthen you to obey, regardless of personal consequences

Our Method

- This book is designed to be used daily for four weeks. Six days of each week contain *both* a devotional study of Scriptures related to music *and* a lesson on how music works. The seventh day of each week is review.
- Key Scripture passages have been selected for you to read and answer questions about. Explanation of words or context is given as needed (*see special note about definitions on page 36*).
- You are encouraged to memorize a number of Scripture verses related to being a godly musician.
- Four of the basic elements of music will be presented to you in a simple, systematic way with plenty of review built in. These elements are text, melody, harmony, and rhythm.

The daily Bible study portion of this guide is referred to as “Scripture” and the daily music instruction portion is called “Song.” ***Both of these portions are to be done in one day.*** They include detailed instruction on what to do each day within the context of daily devotions. The numbers after “Scripture” and “Song” will denote the week and day (e.g. *Scripture 1.2* = Week 1, Day 2). The format includes singing, reading, and praying. “Sing” corresponds to the hymn that is across from the Bible study page each day. Beside the hymn title is the track number for the song on our music CD, *Great Is the Lord*. If you did not get this music recording at the time you got this book, you may order it from us. The songs are also available on the two Web sites listed on the copyright page on the left. **We encourage you to sing out loud to God as you begin your time with Him each day!** Also, be sure to take time to pray for God’s help before you begin each day’s study (*note Ephesians 1:15-20*).

By diligently following this study for the next four weeks, you will learn God’s mind on music through daily study of His Word. There are many blanks in which only certain words will fit; therefore, you should know **all Scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible.** A weekly review will capture the essence of the passages by asking thought-provoking questions on what was read, as well as on controversial issues in music. Using what you have learned in your study, you should be able to answer these questions with Scripture.

Introduction

As we have been in many churches in Australia, the Caribbean Islands, and the United States, we have seen a great need for Christians to learn and do the will of God in the area of music. God has led us to write this daily devotional guide to help Christians gain an understanding of what the Bible teaches about music and gain a working knowledge of the four basic parts of music in their hymnals.

We believe that every Christian has a responsibility to glorify God through music. We also believe that every Christian should know how to “offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy” (Psalm 27:6), in a way that is acceptable to Him. God has clearly revealed in His Word His purpose for music, His plan for musicians, and His pattern for music. Every Christian should love God enough to glorify Him by knowing and doing His will about music.

This devotional guide is designed to help Christians fulfill their Biblical responsibilities in the area of music.

- Offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually in a way that is pleasing to Him.
- Teach and admonish Christians with music that is sourced in God and usable by the Holy Spirit.
- Let people see the “new song” God has put within you, so that others may fear and trust in the LORD.

The Bible plainly teaches that God expects the sacrifice of praise continually from every believer. The Holy Spirit gave this command at the end of the book of Hebrews, “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Hebrews 13:15-16).

Because God views praise as a sacrifice, every Christian should be very concerned that his or her offering of praise is *acceptable* to God. An acceptable sacrifice to God is one that He receives, because it is offered according to His instructions. In the Bible, there are many examples of God rejecting the offerings of people, because they or their offering was not acceptable to Him. Cain, Nadab, Abihu, Uzzah, and Uziah are a few.

We learn from the Old Testament that sacrifices that were acceptable to God had two qualities: *holiness* and *excellence*. These two characteristics mark every aspect of worship and service in the tabernacle and temple, according to the commands of the LORD. Indeed, these are two qualities of the LORD himself. These two characteristics are also found in the New Testament as marks of a Spirit-filled Christian’s life.

In order for Christians to be holy and excellent in their music, and thus be acceptable to God, we believe that it is profitable for *every* believer to have a basic understanding of music—what it is and how it works—in addition to knowing God’s Word about music. Knowing some of God’ Word related to music *and* some basic information about music itself will help believers be more effective and consistent in having all of their music—listening, singing, and playing (whether at home, church, work, school, in the car, etc.)—both holy and excellent.

Our Goals for You – When you complete this devotional guide, you should be able to . . .

1. Understand God’s perspective on music.
2. Know what makes an acceptable sacrifice of praise to God.
3. Understand the Bible principles of holiness, excellence, and stewardship; and be able to explain how they relate to, and must govern, every Christian’s music.
4. Understand the meaning of various musical words in the Bible.
5. Understand the meaning of “text,” “melody,” “harmony,” and “rhythm;” and explain them to someone else.
6. Identify these four elements of music in your hymnbook.
7. Identify, understand, and use other pieces of information in your hymnal.
8. Understand a piano keyboard and a number of musical terms.
9. Sing and play from a common hymnal.
10. Discern between Biblical and unbiblical music (i.e. what is both holy and excellent and what is not).
11. Form Biblical convictions about music, and be able to explain and defend them.
12. Help other Christians evaluate their music, using the Scriptures, and point them to other helpful resources.

God deserves to receive much glory and praise from His people, and we should offer to Him liberally. We must never forget that the LORD deserves and demands offerings that are *both* holy *and* excellent. Please do not be one who turns God’s glory into shame (Psalm 4:2) by offering sacrifices of praise that are contrary to His Word.