

session 10 study guide

rock reality

message

What kind of music do you like? Pop with a dash of country? Rhythm and blues with an occasional detour into rap? Classic rock nourished by a hidden love of classical?

For many of us, music is an important element of life. Music can move us, inspire us, affirm us and challenge us. It can remind us of who we are or who we want to become. It can be a solace in pain or a partner in celebration. What does music mean to you? Perhaps more importantly, what does the music that you listen to say to you? What messages are you constantly filling your mind with by the songs you listen to? What do your listening choices say to those around you?

Read the following passage in 1 John 2:1-6,15-17. As you read, consider the following questions: (1) What is the evidence that we know Jesus? (2) How do these verses relate to the music that we listen to?

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. . . .

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting

of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

dig

1. According to this Scripture, what evidence in your life will demonstrate that you know Jesus?

Notice the point made in verse 4: The person who merely says, “I know Jesus; I am a Christian” but does not obey God’s commands is called out as a liar. It is our *actions* that demonstrate our faith, not our words.

2. What does “walk as Jesus did” mean (verse 6)?

3. How can you relate verse 6 to the kind of music that you listen to?

4. Reread verse 15. In your own words, write down what this verse means. Share your answer with the group.

5. Some people take this verse to mean that we should not love our parents, our friends, music, the nature around us or even our bodies. Why keep the oceans clean? Why eat healthy or care about our friends? The Bible says not to love the world. In one sense this is true. We shouldn't love anything more than God. If we had to choose money, music, our friends or even our family over God, He calls us to choose Him above all else. But God made our bodies. God made nature. God inspires people to create beautiful music. God desires us to have healthy relationships. And He commands us to take care of the things He has given to us, to honor Him with our bodies and to be good stewards of the earth. Read verse 16 again. How does this verse clarify what "the world or anything in the world" means (verse 15)?

6. We are called not to love anything that is not from God—worldly things; things that come from our sinful, fallen nature; things that do not bring glory to God. How does this relate to the kind of music you listen to?

7. Can secular music bring glory to God? Why or why not?

apply

1. What are two of your favorite songs right now?

2. What do you like most about those two songs? The music? The lyrics? The “feeling” of each song? The dance moves from the video? The artist’s lifestyle?

3. What do you know about the artist’s lifestyle? His or her morals? His or her behavior? His or her beliefs?

4. Is it important to know these things about the artists and groups that you listen to? Why or why not?

5. How would you feeling listening to these songs with . . .

a younger sibling, cousin or friend in the room?

your parents in the room?

God in the room?

6. List 4 to 5 popular songs in the left-hand column of the chart on the following page. After listing each song, place a check mark under each of the themes in the table that apply to that particular song.¹ Do you think it's possible to frequently listen to one kind of music or artist without listening to the words?

Violence					
Self-Abuse					
Rebellion					
Prejudice					
Perverted Sex					
Permissive Sex					
People as Objects					
Occult/Satanism					
Materialism					
Hedonism					
Gloom/Despair					
Escape					
Death					
Crude Language					
Anti-God					
Anti-Authority					
Anger/Agression					
Anarchy					
Alcohol/Drugs					
Song Title					

7. If you believe you can separate the music from the words, what happens when other people (for example, your friends, your parents or your siblings) hear you listening to this kind of music? What will they think?

8. Imagine for a moment that you are the music director at a new radio station, KGOD 97.9 FM. As director, you are responsible for choosing the songs to be played on your station. What programming guidelines could the following Scriptures help you to establish?

James 4:4-8

1 Peter 2:9-12

1 John 2:15-17

1 John 4:1-5

9. The station's tagline is "good music, great artists, God-pleasing." Based on this, what kinds of factors should you consider when determining whether or not to play a certain musical artist?

10. Based on the factors you came up with in the previous questions, now make a list of some of the popular groups that you would play or not play.

Play	Do Not Play

reflect

1. How do you use music? To relax? To zone out? To pump up? To put words and melodies to your feelings?

2. How does music influence you? How big a part does secular music play in your life? How many hours a day do you listen to it?

4. What do you think Jesus would say about secular music?

5. What role does God currently play in your music-listening habits? Do you feel that you need to change your habits?

6. Do you think the beat of the music can have sexual or violent influences in a person's life? Why or why not?

7. What musicians or groups today are a positive influence on our minds and actions?

meditation



Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.
Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God
the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

EPHESIANS 5:19-20

Note

1. David Lynn, *Rock Talk* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, Youth Specialties, 1991), p. 31. Used by permission.