

Ephesians
Cosmic Harmony
Ephesians 5:15-21
September 7th, 2025

I. Introduction – Pythagoras & the Great Tradition

Music opens up for us a cosmic order and beauty that God wrote into this world. Music teaches us that there's this cosmic harmony which we can learn, and it is a musical one. It is also one which we _____ in with our own voices. The Great Tradition of music has labored to discover music. This great tradition goes all the way back to Pythagoras, a Greek philosopher and mathematician living in the 6th century. Legend has it he was walking one day by a blacksmith shop, and upon hearing a clatter of hammers flowing out of the shop, he found that the hammering would blend into a harmonious unity. Intrigued by this he further investigated the phenomenon and discovered what we now call 'musical intervals'. He discovered that the beauty and pleasantness of music is mathematical. It is a rational order open to our minds. It's not arbitrary or lucky or the product of natural selection. Rather the beauty of music mediates the beauty and mathematical order of the cosmos God created.

II. Text – Ephesians 5:15-21

15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Music takes time. Not only does learning how to sing well take time, but singing itself takes time. Singing doesn't just take time. But it redeems time by transforming it. Music takes up the dull, deathly silence of time, and animates it. Scripture indicates that the world opened up and began with singing. See Job 38:4-7. Creation began with music, and in the middle of history, singing erupts once again in order to transform time. Music translates time into its created richness, and it unites it to the cosmic harmony which God wrote into this world when He first spoke it, or likely, *sung* it, into existence. Far from wasting time, music perfects time.

III. The Mystery of Music

First. Through music we glorify God by assisting _____ in glorifying God. God's creation is fraught with musical potential. As musicians we assist this world in finding its voice. The piano, for instance, was invented by mankind. It was fashioned out of creation and from creation, and by our hands, it can speak. Just like we do in other areas, we fashion from this world voices to praise Him. He fashioned *us*, and we like our Father fashion pianos and cellos, guitars and violins, all sorts of instruments. From these things, fashioned by man and assisted by man, God is glorified. See Psa. 108:1-3.

Second. Music also tunes *us*. Music is not just something that we produce. We discover it. We tap into it. We discover what sounds pleasant, what sounds good and right and beautiful. As we do this, and then listen to it and participate in it, music has an effect on us. There is a moral quality to music, in other words. Music can disturb us. It can startle and shock us. It can energize us and soothe us. It can have a good effect, and it can have a bad effect. The Greeks knew this and spoke of different _____ of music. Certain musical

modes had a good effect on men: they promoted moderation and courage and temperance. While other modes promoted indulgence and effeminacy and weakness. Music does something to us. In our participation, whether by singing or by listening, we are affected.

Third. The mystery of music also teaches us something deep and glorious about the Lord's plan of redemption. The mystery of God's redeeming plan is written into the harmony of the cosmos. When we listen to and learn and sing music, without us even knowing it, God teaches us about His mysterious work. In particular, music teaches us something about the presence of _____ in the world, and God's good purposes for it.

In great music, discord is present. There are consonant musical intervals, which sound nice and pleasant to the ears. But good music doesn't just involve consonance. It involves discord which heard outside of the context of the song sounds bad and unpleasant. In great music, however, there is an interplay between consonance and discord, harmony and chaos. This interplay creates tension, which in the course of the musical piece gives way to resolution. Discord enters in, but then that discord, in great musical pieces—it is conquered. In the symphony God is composing, He is bringing all good out of the chaos which interrupts and breaks into His cosmic harmony.

Fourth. Music teaches us about submission (v. 21). Music gives us a pattern of unity in diversity, of diversity in unity, which involves ruling and submission. Glorious music involves multiple voices. These voices come together and create something glorious. They are each unique and strong in their own way, but as they combine, they create musical harmony. The voices have to be distinctively what they are, but they have to be well ordered, in submission to the composer, to the conductor, so that they form something glorious—and not some new chaos. This is true of great music, and this is true of what God is doing with this cosmos. We all, tuned and ready, eyes upon Christ, are being harmonized together, growing into a temple for the Lord, the dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2:21-22; see also Psa. 22:3).

IV. Singing Well

First. Work on the basics: melody, volume, and harmony. Learn the _____ of the songs we sing. If you're just getting started, don't worry about singing your specific part (e.g., tenor, bass, alto, soprano). Just sing the melody. Learn the melody. Love the melody. Get that down first, and then sing it loudly. This is _____. Sing manfully (men). Scripture calls us to shout, to extol the Lord, to praise Him. Mumbling not only makes for bad music, it makes for disobedience. Once you have the melody down, once your volume is good and loud, then start working on _____ by singing your particular voice (e.g., bass, tenor, soprano, alto).

Second. Raise your _____ to be better singers than you. Like all things, we should think about this generationally. We want our church to grow musically, to be full of more beautiful songs, our voices more in tune, more skillful—not just five years from now, but twenty-five years from now. This requires us to invest in our children. Encourage singing around the house. Take time to sing around the table, before bed time, read the Bible with your kids, and then conclude with a song. Sing the Lord's Prayer, sing the Creed with your kids. *Sing!*

V. Come & Welcome to Jesus Christ