**Music: A Blessing of God’s Creation**

On the very day that Adam was created, God placed him in a beautiful garden that was filled with the sound of music. If you don’t believe me, just open your window in the springtime and you will hear the same music Adam heard in Eden. I don’t know exactly which species of birds were in his garden, but the sparrows and finches, cardinals and mockingbirds in our backyards are evidence enough that God created music before the first man ever took a breath.

Adam was still alive and well when his descendant Jubal became the “father of all who play the lyre and pipe” (Genesis 4:21), and men have been devising new ways to create musical tones ever since. We find the musical elements of pitch, harmony, rhythm, tempo and dynamics in nature and use the creativity God gave us to express ourselves in the music we sing and play. Paul wrote that “since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen” and music is part of that creation.

Over the centuries and in many cultures, music has developed in a myriad of forms and styles. Amazing technological advances of the past century have made the world very small and nearly all these styles are literally at our fingertips. At any moment a person can choose to listen to classical, rock, country, R&B, blues or urban music. There are influences of Latin and African music that lend a rich texture to the musical landscape.

The music we enjoy can be a real blessing. Unfortunately, not all of the music around us enriches lives. Some music is vile and destructive. In a free society, “artistic expression” is protected and song writers are free to say what they like. Jesus said that “the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart” (Matthew 12:34) and some hearts are filled with hatred, immorality and violence. They use language that is so filthy, their albums have warning labels. Sex acts are described in graphic detail. They have little regard for women and refer to them in the most derogatory and demeaning terms imaginable.

Young people are at the greatest risk of influence by these depraved minds. Studies have shown that frequent exposure to violent and sexually-explicit music can lead to early sexual activity and anti-social behavior, particularly when accompanied by other similar negative influences. It is critical for parents to be engaged and to do their best to know what kind of media to which their children are being exposed. But it is impossible for parents to monitor everything a child does.

There are two things that will best protect our young people from the destructive forces in life.

1. **Set the right example.** Our children need to see adults who are truly committed to living by God’s standards in every area of our lives. No one is perfect, but children can tell whether their parents are sincerely putting forth the effort.
2. **Lead them to build their own faith.** Raising a young person who behaves only because Mom and Dad are watching is a formula for disaster. Every teen must understand that they are personally accountable before their Creator and be motivated to make God’s values their values.

Everything in God’s creation can be used for good or perverted to our detriment and music is no exception. It is up to each of us to make wise musical choices. The wise man wrote, “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.”

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