

TURNING OFF THE MUSIC

Psalms 119:105 ... "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

When I first bought my vehicle, the radio was programmed to turn on automatically when I started the engine. I hated that and had to learn from the instruction book how to turn off that feature. Although I have been a musician nearly my entire life and I love music, I prefer to pick and choose the times when music is playing. I do not want my car to make that choice for me. There are many things in my life that are more important to me than being entertained. I have had some great conversations with God while I drive, that would not have happened if the radio was blaring. But, of course, not everyone feels the same way.

I have friends who wear earphones or headphones almost all day long. They, apparently, feel that entertainment is very important to them. When I was in college, I had dorm-mates who could not study unless loud rock music was playing in their rooms. I have had friends who would walk into their homes, apartments or bedrooms after a day at work or school, immediately turn on the radio, and leave it on until they fell asleep later that night. They seemed unable to function without noise surrounding them. That is certainly their right and I do not even criticize it. However, I cannot relate to it. I need periods of silence or quietness in my life, because it is in those periods that I connect with God.

I was a church musician for many years before I came to the Philippines. I played in worship bands during every service and enjoyed it immensely. We saw many transformative experiences when the Holy Spirit used the music and the atmosphere of worship, to prompt people to submit their lives to Christ. But I also witnessed several occasions when God dramatically moved among the congregation during moments of silence – when we stopped playing our instruments and stopped singing. It appeared that many people sensed God's presence and responded to it more emphatically when the music stopped.

If you turn on the music out of habit the moment you get home or step into your car, you may be missing special moments of silence in which God wants to speak to you. If you stuff your earphones into your ears the minute you wake up, you may not notice that God's still, small voice is longing to communicate to you. If your church plays music constantly during the service or anytime the pastor is not speaking, many people may not hear God speaking to them. Is the reading of God's Word, the inspired message of your pastor, or the prayer time not powerful enough to provide your congregation with an opportunity to hear from God? Do you think that the electric guitar or keyboard is necessary to create that opportunity? If you are a pastor, I recommend that you try conducting a service without music of any kind as an experiment. It may reveal that some members of your congregation are there only for the music. It might reveal that God is able to work powerfully in your church in silence. Try it and learn where the heart of your church really is.

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