

Out of Tune

By Jason Hilburn

I have enjoyed playing the guitar since I was about fourteen years old. I do not use the guitar in worship, because God has specified singing as the type of music He wants in New Testament worship, but I have noticed that there are some lessons we can learn by comparing making music to Christianity.

When I first began playing guitar, I had to learn how to tune the instrument. At first, it was difficult for me to know when the instrument was out of tune, but with time and experience, I could later quickly tell when the instrument was even the least bit out of tune. The tuning process itself also got a lot quicker with time and experience. I would often play with other people, and one of the most challenging parts of playing with other musicians is making sure that your instrument is in tune with theirs. The music will not sound good if even one person is out of tune. We would often use a tuning device that was the standard everybody would use for tuning. By all following the same standard, we would all be able to play together in perfect harmony.

Later in life I tried playing the fiddle/violin, and found it much more difficult, because there were no frets on the neck. Placing a finger between the right frets on a well-tuned guitar basically guarantees that if you pluck the right string, you will be playing the correct note. With a violin, your finger can be just the tiniest bit off of the right spot, and it will sound terrible. The funny thing is that when I thought I was doing fairly well playing the violin, my family still thought it was terrible!

When singing in worship, we should try to sing in tune with one another, as best as we can. The song leader may use a pitch pipe to get the standard pitch, and then with the first note he sings, he sets the "standard" pitch for the rest of the church to follow. The church follows orderly and harmoniously to make beautiful music offered up to God (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:17; Hebrews 2:12).

When it comes to the Word of God:

If we don't know what we are doing, we will be living out of tune with God's Word without realizing it. We may think the way we are living sounds pretty good, but it may actually sound terrible to God and those who really know His Word. *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"* (Prov. 14:12).

If we are off in just one area of our lives, it is enough to make our lives out of tune with God. The Bible says that being overtaken in just one type of sin will cause us to lose fellowship with God and faithful Christians: *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted"* (Galatians 6:1).

We must tune our lives to God's standard (the Bible) to be in tune with one another. *"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"* (Amos 3:3). *"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them"* (Ephesians 5:11; cf. 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 2 John 9-11).

As "instruments" of God, God wants us all to be in tune with the standard, which is His Word (John 12:48). If we are out of tune, let's get tuned up as soon as possible, so we may offer up living sacrifices that are pleasing to Him! (Romans 12:1-2).