Puzzled Worshipper

Adam Hellyer 10 March 2015



Dear Adam,

How do I know what Christian music is 'good' to be listening to and worshipping with? What should I listen out for, and do you have any really 'sound' recommendations?

Yours sincerely,
Puzzled Worshipper

Dear Puzzled Worshipper,

I'm guessing your question is more directed at the lyrics and heart of the music, than whether to favour rap, rock or soul. I also imagine from your question that you've already discovered that not all music sold on Christian record labels is explicitly Chris- centred.

Before I buy a worship album, I like to read the lyrics on the album sleeve (if you're using iTunes,

just Google the tracks). In this way, I can see what kind of words there are before I fall in love with the music and buy a bad CD!

If the lyrics speak about God, His wonder, His majesty, His mighty acts, then I know I will enjoy listening to and worshipping with the album. If the lyrics mostly speak about me, my issues, or my need for God, then I put the album back. It's not that I don't identify with having troubles, I just know that singing about me will not help!

Singing of my need for God (or singing about singing) is not as productive as filling my soul with the wonder of Him. A song full of "I need", "I come", "I sing", is never as glorious as a song full of "You are, "You have", "You will".

Once you are happy that the lyrics are taking you in the right direction, then see if you like the music. Remember, new is not always best. People still listen to the Beatles and Beethoven. Don't disregard old albums; God hasn't changed. If you have access to a computer, you could also compile your own playlist, picking the best tracks from many albums.

I usually hesitate to recommend worship albums, but seeing as you asked, here are some I have enjoyed recently:

- **Chris Tomlin, Burning Lights, CD/DVD Deluxe Edition (2013 Sparrow)**

Contains some great tracks and the live DVD is full of infectious, exuberant praise. Music style: pop rock.

- **Rend Collective, The Art of Celebration (2014 Integrity Music)**

This is a folk band from Ireland that writes catchy, sing-along worship songs.

- **All Sons & Daughters, Live (2013 Integrity Music)**

Very accessible, sincere worship. Focused mostly on God. Also folk rock-influenced.

- **Passion, Take It all (2014 Sixsteprecords)**

My wife says she enjoys every single track on this album! Passion is usually a pretty reliable source of God-focused worship. I also still love their 'Let The Future Begin' album (2013).

- **Passion, Even So Come, Deluxe Edition (2015 Sixsteprecords)**

This album contains a mixture of new songs and modern classics. Music style: pop rock.

Finally, if you want to have music on while you are praying or reading that doesn't have

distracting words, then I can recommend:

- **Bethel Music, Without Words (2013 Bethel Music)**

This album contains only instrumental tracks and is great to have on in the background. I actually used it last night when a group of us were praying in my home.

I hope this has been helpful. Remember, it is also great to make your own music, even if you don't sing well or play an instrument. Even if the silence is deafening in the beginning, make time to worship God from your heart, without the interference of CDs or iTunes. It is always wonderful when you worship God in your own words, singing about what He has done for you. As you grow in boldness, those times will become just as precious as the moments singing along to other people's songs.

Grace, mercy and peace,
Adam