

yourself with the content of Malachi to remember the dangers of this attitude. This prophet's message is quite pertinent to the discussions in this book).

### **-Why did God Command Singing?-**

When Paul wrote these commands to sing, was he providing a pet-passage in order to fill out worship, or was he making a purposeful argument in the letters and saw that singing helped make his point? We would agree that Paul placed these commands in an intentional location to support his overall point in the letters. Understanding those points is the key to understanding our song-service.

Let's back up a few verses to Ephesians 5:15. Paul is making an appeal to wisdom. What we say and how we act are the results of understanding truth and love (4:15ff). He wants us to make every moment count. We avoid foolishness by understanding righteous action. Singing becomes a righteous action to keep us from foolishness. Singing is not about feeling an emotional high in supplement to our spirituality; singing is a way of building and training our spirituality in the wisdom of God. If we are going to build our spirits to be wise, opportunistic, and knowledgeable, then our singing must be well-thought, calculated, and full of poignant truth.

From the Colossian letter we observe Paul building a structure for the body of Christ. From "If you have died with Christ" (2:20) to "If you have been raised with Christ" (3:1) Paul is helping the Colossians see how they can be a holy people without the worldly philosophies of asceticism. The solution to sin is to view self as part of Christ's body. In Christ's body, the biological differences are non-existent. We must, therefore, rid ourselves

of the fleshly practices toward one another: anger, slander, and lying. We must, instead, be guided by the peace of Christ. This peace is displayed through our compassion, kindness, and patience. These, namely love, are the foundation for our singing. Singing is one of the greatest tools to bring about peace in a diverse church.

You will also notice in both Ephesians and Colossians a transition from things which we say (Ephesians 4:25-5:12; Colossians 3:8-15) to how we treat one another (Ephesians 5:21-6:9; Colossians 3:18-4:1). Paul says in Colossians 3:17 “Do every single thing in the name of the Lord Jesus, whether by *word* or by *deed*,” What bridge can we build between what we say (word) and what we do (deed)? In both passages, singing is the bridge, for by it we show subjection to Christ and to one another, and by it we repeat and instill Christ’s own attitudes and words. Singing seeks to inscribe words and thoughts unto one another’s hearts. This practice only has value when those truths bear out in our behavior. Singing, then, is not an arbitrary command to inform us about what kind of entertainment God likes. It is a bonding experience between us and our brethren, between our mouths and our hearts, between our thoughts and our actions, and between our souls and our God. What could be more important to Christians? Very few things can encourage us so effectively towards this end. God knew exactly what He was doing when He asked us to use song to build up one another.

From Ephesians we learn that singing can help us redeem the time and grow in knowledge of what the Lord wants from us. From Colossians we learn that singing is an extension of love and encourages unity in the body of Christ. We must concern ourselves with accomplishing these ends. If our songs do not help us make good use of our time together, do not teach one another the words of Christ, do not encourage unity, or do