

Working in the Performing Arts as a Christian: Cultivating Godly Attitudes and Navigating Spiritual and Emotional Challenges

HEARTSET

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The performing arts—whether theater, dance, music, or film—have a unique power to move hearts, shape culture, and reflect the human experience. For a Christian called into this space, the platform offers immense opportunity and sobering responsibility. More than talent and technique, what sustains and sanctifies a believer in the performing arts is a heart wholly devoted to Christ. This article explores the biblical attitudes to cultivate, the heart posture to maintain, and the spiritual and emotional challenges to expect—so that the Christian artist may live faithfully and fruitfully in the spotlight and behind the scenes.

1. Cultivating the Right Attitudes: Humility, Excellence, and Servanthood

Humility:

The performing arts often celebrate ego, applause, and public acclaim. But the Christian is called to a different standard. The artist's gifts are not for self-glory, but for God's.

"What do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4:7).

All creativity flows from the Creator. A humble performer remembers that their ability is a stewardship, not a possession. Whether performing for one person or one million, the heart cry must echo John the Baptist: *"He must increase, but I must decrease"* (John 3:30).

Excellence:

Christians in the arts must not confuse mediocrity with humility. Our God is a God of beauty and order. Thus, to pursue excellence in our craft is to reflect His glory.

"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men" (Colossians 3:23).

The Christian performer strives to hone their skills, not for accolades, but because their audience is ultimately God. This excellence is not performance-driven perfectionism, but a heart of worship in every movement, line, or song.

Servanthood:

Rather than seeking to be the center, the Christian performer is called to serve—both the story being told and the people receiving it.

Jesus, the most glorious being, came *"not to be served but to serve"* (Mark 10:45).

Artists who follow Him must approach their work as an act of service: to bring truth, beauty, hope, and even godly discomfort to an audience in need of Christ.

2. The Heart Posture of Worship and Surrender

Performing can easily become an idol. The stage, the approval of others, and the love of success can subtly usurp the place of God in a believer's heart. Therefore, the Christian in the arts must regularly return to a posture of worship and surrender.

Worship in All Things:

Art is not merely a job—it can be worship. When done in love and obedience to God, even a secular role or script can become an altar.

"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Whether playing a character, singing a line, or designing a set, the Christian can glorify God in their creative expression.

Surrender of Outcomes:

In a highly competitive and unstable field, the temptation to control outcomes can be fierce. Will I get the role? Will my work be seen? Will I succeed?

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Success in God's eyes is not based on visibility or fame but on faithfulness. The performer must surrender results to the Lord and rest in His providence.

3. Spiritual and Emotional Challenges Unique to the Performing Arts

The Idol of Affirmation:

Applause is addictive, and it so easily appeals to our broken sinful nature. The affirmation of an audience can feel life-giving—yet it is a dangerous substitute for God's approval.

Paul asks: *“Am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? ... If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ”* (Galatians 1:10).

Christian artists must ask: Whose praise do I most crave? God's “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:23) must be our highest aim.

Comparison and Envy:

The arts world is flooded with comparison. Watching others succeed can trigger envy, insecurity, or despair.

But Scripture teaches, *“Each of you should test your own actions. Then you can take pride in yourself, without comparing yourself to someone else”* (Galatians 6:4, NIV).

The Christian artist must battle envy with gratitude, trusting that God's timing, roles, and recognition are custom-tailored for His purposes in each life.

Compromising for the Spotlight:

Opportunities in the arts sometimes conflict with biblical convictions—whether in content, conduct, or company.

When faced with compromise, Daniel's example is instructive. He *“resolved that he would not defile himself”* (Daniel 1:8).

Christians in the arts must decide ahead of time where their moral lines are—and by God's grace, not cross them, even at great cost.

Loneliness and Isolation:

The Christian in the arts may often feel like a foreigner. Finding fellow believers who share your values in artistic spaces can be rare.

But we are never truly alone. Jesus promises, *“I am with you always, even to the end of the age”* (Matthew 28:20). Christian artists should seek out godly community for support, encouragement, and accountability. The body of Christ is essential for long-term endurance.

4. Living as a Witness in the Arts

The performing arts are a mission field. Christians in this sphere have a unique opportunity to be salt and light, not by preaching sermons on stage, but by living a life of integrity, joy, and compassion.

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

Your backstage attitude, your grace under criticism, your refusal to gossip, your kindness to the overlooked—these can powerfully testify of Christ.

5. Keeping the Soul Anchored

To survive and thrive spiritually in the performing arts, daily communion with Christ is non-negotiable.

- **Prayer** is the anchor of the soul. Jesus Himself often withdrew to pray (Luke 5:16), and so must we.
 - **The Word of God** is our nourishment. Let it shape our identity and renew our mind (Romans 12:2).
 - **Worship** keeps our hearts soft and God-centered.
 - **Sabbath rest** guards us from burnout and reorients us toward dependence on God.
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Conclusion: Called to Shine, Not Burn

The performing arts can be exhilarating, beautiful, and deeply meaningful. But they can also be spiritually perilous. The Christian must go in not seeking fame but seeking faithfulness. We are called to shine—not to burn out in pursuit of the world's applause, but to glow with the steady light of Christ.

Let your creativity flow from the Creator. Let your performances reflect His truth and beauty. And let your life off-stage be your most powerful act of worship.

“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Colossians 3:17).

Ask Your Mentor...pick some

1. Have you ever struggled with pride or people-pleasing in your artistic work? How did you overcome it?
2. What helps you keep your identity rooted in Christ rather than in performance, reviews, or opportunities?
3. How have you navigated roles or creative decisions that conflicted with your faith?
4. Have you ever felt isolated in your convictions within a secular artistic environment? What helped you endure or find community?
5. How do you maintain spiritual rhythms and disciplines amidst the busyness or unpredictability of creative work?
6. What's one piece of advice you would give to a younger Christian seeking to live faithfully in the performing arts?
7. What practices have helped you keep your art an act of worship instead of an idol?
8. Have you seen God use your work to influence or minister to someone else? Can you share that story?
9. What are resources or organizations that you recommend for Christians in the film or performing arts industry?

Reflect & Respond...pick any 2

1. Which part of the article most resonated with you, and why?
2. Where have you seen pride, insecurity, or the need for approval show up in your artistic work?
3. Do you view your artistic talent as a stewardship from God? How has that shaped your decisions or approach?

4. In what ways do you struggle with comparison or envy of other artists' success?
5. Have you ever faced a situation where you were tempted to compromise your convictions for an opportunity? What did you do?
6. Do you find it easy or difficult to surrender your career or creative dreams to God? Why?
7. How do you typically respond to rejection or criticism in your field? How does your faith affect that response?
8. Where do you feel most spiritually vulnerable in your artistic environment (loneliness, affirmation-seeking, burnout, etc.)?

Creative Connection

Think of a song, character or person from a book, movie or history, or an everyday item that personifies the main idea of this lesson and share it.

Go Do. Action step... pick any 2

1. What is one area of your artistic practice where you can pursue greater excellence for God's glory?
2. What regular habits (e.g., prayer, journaling, Scripture reading) can you commit to to stay grounded in Christ?
3. Is there a role, job, or project you need to prayerfully reconsider because it does not align with your values?
4. What boundaries do you need to set to remain faithful to God in your creative work?
5. Who is someone in your artistic circle you can serve or encourage this week?
6. What Scripture can you meditate on to fight the temptation of seeking human affirmation over God's approval?
7. How can you intentionally bring your faith into conversations backstage or in your artistic community in a respectful way?
8. What day or time this week will you set aside to rest and reconnect with God (Sabbath)?

Go Deeper: Further Conversation & Study for those who want to go deeper.

1. What does it mean to do art "for the glory of God" in a non-Christian context?
2. How can Christians in the performing arts balance creative freedom with biblical convictions?
3. In what ways can the church better support and disciple artists in their unique calling?
4. How can art be used redemptively to reflect the good, the true, and the beautiful in a broken world?
5. What are some examples of Christian artists who have shaped culture faithfully? What can we learn from their lives?
6. What does it look like to "shine, not burn out" as a Christian artist (referencing the article's conclusion)?
7. Is it possible to be excellent at your craft without idolizing success? What disciplines help make that possible?
8. What does it mean to serve your audience—even if your content isn't explicitly "Christian"?

Sources & Resources

Photo credit: rawpixel

Article: Behind the Lines: The Rise of Christians in Hollywood, <https://www.philcooke.com/behind-the-lines-the-rise-of-christians-in-hollywood/>

Book: *Imagine: A Vision for Christians in the Arts* – Steve Turner;

Interview: <https://blog.iamsecond.com/im-a-professional-filmmaker-and-a-christian-heres-what-thats-like>

Organization: Hollywood Prayer Network, <https://hollywoodprayernetwork.org/about-us>