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The Power of Praise

Joseph Khabbaz

*I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.
(Psalm 104:33)*

You can experience great strength through song. In 2022, art director Vitali Alekseenok remembered scrambling amid conflict as the annual international classical music festival was scheduled in Ukraine's second-largest city. While thunderous explosions were heard overhead, organizers improvised and moved the festival into a subway station. Dubbed the "concert between explosions," instruments were played for a grateful public. Alekseenok would state, "Music can unite," and unite it did, as audience members put their hands over their hearts while the Ukrainian national anthem was played. Whether we are aware of it or not, we too are in the midst of a conflict. The enemy of our soul wants us to proverbially "stop playing" and become discouraged. Like the musicians in Ukraine, how can we continue to play "between explosions?" How can we, like the Psalmist say, "I will sing to the Lord as long as I live?"

Throughout the Bible, we see music used as a powerful tool to dispel despair and provide courage to God's people. In the New Testament, Paul and Silas are publicly beaten and imprisoned by corrupt magistrates fueled by an angry mob. Leg irons were placed on them, just like all the other prisoners, but there was one notable difference between them and their inmates; Paul and Silas "sang praises unto God" while shackled.

In the Old Testament, the children of Israel are journeying through the wilderness, yet they praise God while pilgriming through the desert. One significant song, composed by Moses and Miriam in Exodus 15, invites all of God's people to "...sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted." Commenting on the experience of Israel in the wilderness and its implications on our lives, Ellen White writes, "As the children of Israel, journeying through the wilderness, cheered their way by the music of sacred song, so God bids His children today gladden their pilgrim life" (Education, 167). Singing was one of the ways God saw Israel through their wilderness experience; such is the power of praising God.

Singing is as much an act of worship as prayer. In fact, the longest book in the Bible is a hymn book - Psalms. Could it be that God never wanted us to lose sight of music as a source of power that draws us closer into His presence? Whether singing during a church service or playing music in the dorm room. Whether singing at morning meditations in chapel or having our AirPods in during our morning exercise routine, music draws us closer to God and nourishes a spiritual connection through praise.

Today, may the songs we sing and the music we play be a weapon against discouragement. Like the subway music festival, we can experience the power of music in our lives, even amid a battle.

Reflection

1. What is one encouraging song you currently have on your playlist?
2. How can music be used as a weapon against discouragement?
3. What are some ways music can draw us closer into God's presence?
4. What is your favorite song of all time that draws you closer to God?

News and Resources

- Join us this Friday at 7:30pm for a special Vespers service as we dedicate our ERC and Vision Trip volunteers as well as our Student Missionaries. Our guest speaker is Pr. Richie Halversen. We look forward to seeing you there!
- If you are feeling anxious or have recently experienced loss or grief, call 423.236.2782 to talk to a counselor on campus! (This is a free service for Southern students.)
- **Talk** with Chaplain [Anna Bennett](#) or [Joseph Khabbaz](#) if you need someone to pray with or have a desire to grow spiritually.