

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

Sing!

November 19, 2018

“Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world.” - Martin Luther.

I have always enjoyed music. One of my favorite times of the day is turning up the volume in the house to sing and dance with my kids. Taylor Swift’s “Shake it Off” is the current favorite of my daughter Ruby, who will walk into the room and ask our Alexa device to play “Shake it Off” over and over and over again. The dance party would go on for days, if we let her.

Music is something that transcends cultures, languages, and people. It has been enjoyed since the beginning of mankind and will continue to be enjoyed until the end. What is it about music, though, that is so enjoyable? Why *should* we enjoy music?

This past weekend, Ben Snyder continued our series *Pause* by discussing how music allows us to pause and connect with God and others. More specifically, he suggested that singing connects our hearts to something bigger than ourselves.

It’s not just singing alone, either. In 2013, [Time Magazine reported](#), “Group singing has been scientifically proven to lower stress, relieve anxiety, and elevate endorphins,” which is reason enough to consider singing in a group. It’s not just good for us physiologically, though, singing together is something God designed us to do for our spiritual life.

In Ephesians 5:17-20, Paul writes,

*¹⁷ Don’t act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.
¹⁸ Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit,¹⁹ singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.²⁰ And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

This particular passage is specific to the church in Ephesus, but we can observe a few things. First, in encouraging the Ephesians to act according to God’s will, he reminds them to not fill their lives with pointless and harmful actions (like drunkenness) but to be filled with the Holy Spirit. But how? One way is to sing!

He invites the Ephesians—and us—to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs or to sing to God, about God, and about our relationship with God.

In this act of group singing, we connect with the heart of God and with the hearts of those around us—because the God with whom we’re connecting also lives in the hearts of all of those around us as we worship together in song! Or, as Ben said, “the power in the pause is remembering the one who lives in me”.

Questions:

Do you enjoy singing with other followers of Jesus? Why or why not? How does singing with others make you feel inside?

Next Steps:

Find a way to incorporate more group singing into your daily life. Add singing to the activities of your CedarCreek Group, to your family prayer time, and wherever else you may find an opportunity.

For a full playlist of songs from our Pause series, search for CedarCreek Worship on Spotify.

Prayer:

Father in Heaven, thank you for the gift of singing. Help me to know that each time I sing with others to and about you, I’m connecting with your heart and with the hearts of those around me. Help me to do this more and more each day. I ask this in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit, amen.

This post was written by Andy Rectenwald, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.

Your Love is Loyal

November 20, 2018

I grew up listening to Southern Gospel music, particularly a band called “The Nelons.” My mom and my grandpa introduced me to the band’s music, and it became a shared interest. I would belt out the music, singing about God and how wonderful he is. It introduced me to a way that I could worship God through my voice and my body while dancing along.

Singing to God is a way we can experience connection with him instead of only studying about him. He is not just confined to the Bible—he is living. And if you find the style of worship music that speaks to you, it can have a special way of allowing you to experience his Spirit. I have since expanded my musical palette, and I am really loving Lauren Daigle’s music. Her song “Loyal” invites us to worship God, pointing out ways that he is worthy of our praise. When I worship through this song, I’m not only causing him delight, but also reminding myself of his glory. In this simple act, I am strengthening my connection with God.

I would encourage you to take a moment to listen to the song before reading on (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9JCfVyq1eI>).

In her song, she is praising God for the following amazing attributes:

- **God will never change.**
 - Hebrews 13:8: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”
- **His love is loyal, and he is faithful, keeping his promises. His love doesn’t waver when we have problems.**
 - Deuteronomy 7:9: “Understand, therefore, that the Lord your God is indeed God. He is the faithful God who keeps his covenant for a thousand generations and lavishes his unfailing love on those who love him and obey his commands.”
- **He is always there for us. He listens when we talk to him.**
 - 1 John 5:14-15: ¹⁴ And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. ¹⁵ And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for.”
- **He knows our hearts, even the things we hide.**

- Psalm 44:21: “God would surely have known it, for he knows the secrets of every heart.”
- **And yet, he gives us grace.**
 - Romans 3:24: “Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.”

God knows the power of music. There’s something about it that is different than speaking the words alone. It also connects to our memory differently. Worshiping this way really is a whole-body experience. And God wants to share that experience with you!

Psalm 100:1-3

¹Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth!²Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy. ³Acknowledge that the Lord is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Questions:

This weekend, Ben taught us that singing connects our hearts to something bigger than us. Who are you singing to (and what are you singing about) with the music you usually listen to?

What style of music is your favorite? Who could you listen to so that you may be able to worship God through their music?

Have you experienced God through music before? How did it make you feel?

Next Steps:

Think of a worship song that praises God for his amazing attributes. Find one that fits the genre of music you can most easily sing (and dance) to, and try listening in the car! Make a choice to sing to God—it doesn’t matter how well you sing. As long as you sing with your heart, you can strengthen your connection to God.

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for the gift of music. It is so amazing to be able to experience your Spirit moving inside of me as I sing to you. You are constant, loyal, faithful, and unwavering. You are always there for me, ready to listen. You

know my heart better than I know it myself. And you still love me. You are so much more than I deserve. Amen.

This post was written by Ashlee Grosjean, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.

I Am a Child of God

November 21, 2018

I grew up in a musical family—we all learned to play instruments (I play the piano and the recorder), and we regularly sang or made music together, especially at Christmas time. Growing up in Germany, I was exposed to the traditional Christian hymns in the Protestant church we attended. Imagine sitting in a 17th or 18th century church with high ceilings and hand-painted depictions from the Bible on the walls and the ceiling. Beautifully carved woodwork adorned the altar and the pulpit. These churches are not museums, despite their age, but are still used by the local communities every week. When the congregation sang the hymns, the sound would swell in a beautiful fashion all around you, amplified by the clever architecture designed to do exactly that. It felt special. But yet, looking back, I never really felt connected by these songs to God despite my love for singing.

When I came to CedarCreek about 1 ½ years ago, it was the first time that I heard modern Christian songs, and it was the first time I heard them in English. But I instantly connected with these songs, and singing them made me feel directly connected to God. It is a wonderful feeling but hard to describe. It almost feels to me like there is an invisible thread from my heart that goes upwards straight to God, which tugs at me as I am singing. And then the feeling of connection spreads like a flame all through my chest and through my arms and finally my legs all the way to the ground. Singing during service definitely makes my heart feel now (unlike before) connected to something bigger than me.

This week, we are talking about how singing to God and worshipping him this way can connect us to him. Yesterday's contribution discussed a song that teaches us about who God is, and today, I will introduce you to a song that teaches us about who God says we are: "Who You Say I Am" by Ben Fielding and Reuben Morgan.

VERSE 2

Free at last

He has ransomed me

His grace runs deep

While I was a slave to sin

Jesus died for me

Yes He died for me

CHORUS 2

Who the Son sets free

Oh is free indeed

I'm a child of God

Yes I am

In my Father's house

There's a place for me

I'm a child of God

Yes I am

I love the lyrics of this song because they make me feel at home. They teach us that no matter who we are and what we have done, we are, and always will be, children of God. He sets us free, and there is always a place for us in his house.

These lyrics remind me a lot of how my 8-year old daughter will occasionally get mad at me, as children that age do, for saying “No” to something (most recently: “No, we cannot have fresh cherries right now because they are not in season and thus hideously expensive!”). She then ignores me or tells me that she can’t hear me because I apparently no longer exist in her mind. But before too long, she comes running back and wraps her arms around me really tightly, tells me that she’s sorry for being mad, and says that she loves me. We are like that in God’s eyes—sometimes we may turn away from him, but deep down, we know that as soon as we decide to return, he will be there, waiting for us with open arms and all his love. Because we are, and will always be, children of God.

Questions:

When was the last time that you sang in church? If you did not sing, why not?

Were you afraid that your voice might not be in tune? Do you think it would matter to God whether you were singing in tune or not?

Next Steps:

Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKw6uqtGFfo> and take some time to listen to today’s song. Read the lyrics and think about how they make you feel. Write some notes on who God thinks that you are in his eyes. Next time you are in church, sing with abandon, or if that is still too scary, at least mouth the words to help you connect with God during the song.

Prayer:

Dear father in heaven, thank you for giving me the joy of singing and for providing me with the opportunity to worship you and connect with you this way. Thank you for giving the gift of music to those women and men who have written and performed such beautiful songs that help us connect with you. Thank you for all the songs that bring love, joy, and peace to our hearts. Amen.

This post was written by Cordula Mora, a regular contributor to and editor of the LivingItOut Bible Study.

Run Out of That Grave

November 22, 2018

I was saved quite a long time before I really *knew* Jesus. I believed he had died for my sins, that God raised him from the dead, and that I was saved. Sadly, I wasn't living in the victory I had in Jesus. I wasn't living in the joy, peace, hope, and grace that he had given and that I had accepted.

It was not until later that I learned that if I wanted to experience Jesus' victory in my life, I needed to make a daily decision to pause and spend time with him. I did this by praying, reading the Bible, listening to him, worshiping and praising him daily. I have been so blessed by my quiet time with Jesus. I feel his peace so strongly. I have found that praising and worshiping God helps make my days go much better because I have first focused on him.

There are many ways you can worship, but I know it warms God's heart when we worship him by singing. When I sing to God, my body starts moving, my lips are smiling, and I am focused on the one who loves you and me more than we can ever imagine. (I hope my singing sounds better to God than it does to others.)

One of my favorite words to describe God is *glorious*. Please take a moment to listen to the song before reading on (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LfzpfqrPUDo>).

Synonyms for glorious include celebrated, acclaimed, honored, magnificent, and triumphant. I love the song "Glorious Day"! This song reminds me how glorious God is and how he brought victory into my life by defeating the grave. "Glorious Day" starts out reminding me that before Jesus:

*I was buried beneath my shame,
Who could carry that kind of weight
It was my tomb
Till I met you.
I was breathing but not alive
All my failures I tried to hide
It was my tomb
Till I met You*

*YOU CALLED MY NAME
AND I RAN OUT OF THAT GRAVE
OUT OF THE DARKNESS
INTO YOUR GLORIOUS DAY
Now your mercy has saved my soul
Now your freedom is all I know
The old made new
Jesus when I met you*

When the song comes to the part where the tempo gets faster and the words are sung, "You called my name / and I ran out of that grave / out of the darkness / into your glorious day," my heart leaps for joy because I am so grateful and thankful for all God has done for me. He has saved me from the grave and changed me. Honestly, if he would have just died on the cross, I would be forever grateful, but he did so much more than that... he called you and me into his glorious day. I think this means he wants us to experience his majesty, his presence, his love, joy hope, faithfulness, and peace at all times. He has made us a new creation through our belief in Jesus.

God's plan wasn't just to save us from hell and let us spend our eternity in heaven with him. He wants us to experience him while we are on earth through his Holy Spirit and to live a victorious life.

2 Corinthians 5:17

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone, and a new life has begun!

1 Corinthians 15:57

But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Questions:

What is your favorite worship song? Why? What have you learned about Jesus through the song? What is your favorite word to describe Jesus? What is your favorite way to worship God?

Next Steps:

Pause and really listen to worship music. Let the music soften your heart and help you be grateful to God. Write out the words of your favorite worship song and make it a personal prayer to God. Speak to others about the hope you have in Jesus. Take time daily to spend time with Jesus and deepen your relationship with him.

Prayer:

Jesus, you are the victor! You defeated Satan on the cross. You love me that much. I am so grateful. You are the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and you still want an intimate close relationship with me. I am so humbled that you care that much about me. Help me to make you the priority in my life and forgive me when I get distracted by this world. Help me to pause and turn to you always. I love and praise you. Amen.

This post was written by Marsha Raymond, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study

Bubbling Over

November 23, 2018

A few years ago, my wife and I were in the small living room at my uncle's fishing cabin in Tennessee. A 2-liter bottle of soda that was perched on an end table fell to the floor and bounced toward the fireplace. There, a sharp corner of a brick pierced the bottle near one end. It proceeded to spin like a pinwheel, spraying soda everywhere. In panic mode, we set about stopping the spray and cleaning up the mess. But what had happened?? Well, that bottle was filled with carbonation (carbon dioxide), and when agitated and provided with an opening, it bubbled out from the bottle not caring where it landed.

This describes our relationship with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives within those who have received Christ as the forgiver of their sins and the leader of their lives. When we are obedient to God's will and surrender ourselves to the influence of the Holy Spirit, we can demonstrate this to him by singing! Paul writes about this in Ephesians:

Ephesians 5:17-19 (

*Don't act thoughtlessly, but **understand what the Lord wants you to do.**¹⁸ Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, **be filled with the Holy Spirit,**¹⁹ **singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.***

The obedience and surrender is the "agitation" that excites the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit bubbles out in our life through song. That worship, praise, and testimony "spray" everywhere. When this happens, we connect with God in a way that is supernatural. From a surrendered heart, the Holy Spirit moves us to sing a song that rises to the heart of God. We are moved to sing songs that focus on who God is in his character and his holiness. We are moved to sing songs about what he has done for us and how he continues to move in our lives.

Even those of us who can't sing, give voice to song at the urging of the Holy Spirit. I love the Newsboys arrangement of "In Christ Alone". You can watch the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FsgwfliQoqg>.

Many times as I study and pray, this song comes to my heart, and I sing:

In verse 1, I sing of Jesus as my hope, my life, my strength, and my song. He is my cornerstone, the solid ground that will keep me through the highs and lows in life. He is my all in all. I stand in the love of Christ.

In verse 2, I sing of Jesus coming to earth as a baby. A gift of love that would be scorned by the ones He came to save. On the cross He died and my every sin was laid upon Him. (I am typically crying about now...) I live in the death of Christ.

In verse 3, I sing of his resurrection and his victory over death. As a result sin's curse has lost its grip on me. I am his and he is mine. I am bought with the precious blood of Christ.

In verse 4, I sing of freedom from fear and guilt and the power of Christ in my life. He commands my destiny. No power in the universe can separate us. Until he returns or calls me home I'll stand in the power of Christ.

Even now as I sing this song, my heart overflows within me. It carries a special message from my heart to the heart of God the Father and God the Son. It rises from and is powered by the Holy Spirit. This song expresses the greatness of my Savior and his love for me. It speaks of the great price he paid for me and that he will never let me go!! It gives testimony to my new life with him and the power by which I live!!! Hey...am I bubbling??

Questions:

When you pause and consider who God is and what he has done for you, are you prompted to sing? If so, what do you sing about and to whom do you sing?

What songs move your heart and connect you to God in a supernatural way?

Next Steps:

Identify songs that have a message about the character and work of God that move your heart. Put those songs on a playlist or download them for easy listening. Then when you pause to consider your relationship with God, play and sing those songs.

For a full playlist of songs from our *Pause* series, search for CedarCreek Worship on Spotify.

Share your favorite of those songs with your group. Talk with them about the words and what they mean to you and your relationship with God. Encourage

them to express their love for God through song so they can connect with him in this special way.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, I thank you for the gift of music and how it helps me connect with you in a way that nothing else can. I pray that my heart will desire an understanding of your will and surrender to the Holy Spirit, so that I can bubble over with joy in the songs that magnify you. In Jesus's name, amen.

This post was written by Terry McGraner, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut Bible Study.