

What Beethoven Overcame

Ludwig van Beethoven, a German songwriter and pianist, remains one of the most famous and influential of all composers.

Everybody recognizes that he was a musical genius. But few realize the adversity he had to overcome to achieve greatness.

In his 20s, Beethoven began to lose his hearing. Because of it, he said he couldn't *feel* the music as he once had; on one occasion he said his fingers became "thick."

His hearing problems haunted him into the middle years of his life, but he kept it a guarded secret.

By the time he reached his 50s, Beethoven was completely deaf. But he refused to give up. He was once overheard shouting at the top of his voice, "I will take life by the throat!"



Many of his biographers believe the only reason Beethoven remained productive for so long was his determination.

What about us? You and I may not be musical geniuses, but there should be some things in life we are passionate about. Is there a determination in ...

- Your marriage, to be the best possible husband or wife?
- Your job, to meet and exceed the expectations of your employer?
- Your personal development, to continue to hone the talents that our Lord has given you?
- Your church, to add your spiritual gifts to the kingdom's work in the local congregation?
- Your community, to be a good citizen and support causes that enhance the quality of life there?
- Your relationships, to be a positive influence on family and friends, making their lives richer?

The magnitude of passion we bring to life and work will determine the degree of our success. The Bible is clear about it:

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

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things (1 Corinthians 9:24-25 ESV).