

P.O.D.

Excerpt from "Testify"

by Mark Moring
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Do you feel like everything's in place for *Testify* to do well?

Sandoval: We still have our doubts and concerns, but we've been assured that this is a new label, a new company. We've met a lot of the people, and they've been amazing and they really dig the record. We have all the support we think we need. But it just comes down to the songs and to a label that's willing to work it. And I think if this record does well, a lot of people will go back to buy *Payable on Death*.

A press release from Word/Warner, which is distributing your music to Christian bookstores, called *Testify* your "most spiritual album to date."

Sandoval: (laughs) I think it's a sales gimmick. My thing is, everything we do is for its time and place. We've been through so many things in the past years, but we're always out there, loving on God and people. We're doing the best we can.

When we first came out [in the early '90s], we were on such a mission to get our Christianity out there, to tell people about things we believe in. Now, people know that; they expect that of P.O.D. Now it's just about going out there and living it day by day and trying to make it. We're just trying to keep everything in context.

But we go into every album on our knees, and pray that God would do something awesome with it. And if it's meant to be, it's meant to be; and if it's not, then God will be gracious to us. But we've always given it over to God, and I think that comes out in our music. There's never really an agenda. The songs and the lyrics are always about what's going on in our lives right now. And of course it's just the P.O.D. way to always intertwine that hope that we have in Christ, that love that we have, that promise that we have from God above. It's always intertwined in our music.

DISCUSSION

- 1) What was their mission when they first came out as a band? _____

- 2) What is expected of them now? _____
- 3) What do they do as they make new albums? _____
- 4) What is the "P.O.D." way? _____

When I listen to your albums, with some songs I think, *That's pretty in your face with faith*, other songs I think, *That could be about faith*, or it could just be about relationships, and other songs I'm like, *That's just a great rock song*.

Sandoval: Yes! You're exactly right. That's the combination plate we're going for. There are songs that people know without a doubt what we're talking about. There are other ones that say, *He could mean this; he could mean that*. It's the same thing with *Testify*. But even if it's songs like "Boom" [from *Satellite*], just fun rock songs, you're always going to catch a lyric or two that is hoping to inspire you to something else. It's that little color in the painting that's going to change your mind about how you see it.

That's how we think about music. I don't want to explain the songs. Some are going to be obvious, and some are going to apply to your life—and not mine and not someone else's. But I honestly believe that as long as we've given this music and these lyrics to God, he'll make it make sense to you in your own life, because it does in mine.

There are songs on *Testify* that are straight out [about faith], and you know what we're talking about. And then there are songs that are like, man, that could be between me and my son, or between me and my mom. That's what's cool about our music; we always keep people guessing and wondering.

- 5) Why do they choose to write some songs where the meaning of the song isn't obvious? _____
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But one new song doesn't take any guessing: "Strength of My Life" is clearly a straight-up worship song.

Sandoval: It pretty much turned out that way. When Matis [Hasidic reggae singer [Matisyahu](#)] came in, we told him to just freestyle, and we came up with a little reggae dub. I wanted him to open up his book and sing some Hebrew, but he just took some Scripture and one of the Psalms from King David, and ended up singing it. He wrote some lyrics, and after that, I went in and put in my own lyrics.

Basically what it came out to be was a cry of King David, saying, "I'm not going to fear no matter who comes against me." The lyric says, "Strength of my life, who will I dread? Even though the wicked doer tries to devour my flesh." It's mean. It's tough. But it's just that cry, saying that I have no fear. King David says even though tens of thousands surround him and they want to take him out, he's going to rest his head because he knows that nothing's going to happen to him. Man, that's the peace that I want in my life.

Anyway, here you have P.O.D. known for being Christians in this rock band, and then you have this Hasidic Jewish cat! We just had an instant bond with him, a respect for him and his beliefs and his culture. We just broke bread and we hung out for a day.

We had a kosher meal. We just hung out just like brothers. We really had a kindred spirit with him

6) What is the song “Strength of My Life” about? _____

Sounds like a blast. Anything else about *Testify* you'd like to add?

Sandoval: Just how excited we are about this record. Just the word *testify*—apply it to your own life and the things you believe in. We encourage people to speak those things and to *be* those things, and to scream it from the rooftops. And whatever way you do it—whether it's music, whether it's art, whether it's just being a daddy or a schoolteacher—I think with this record, we're just really trying to encourage people to stand by those things that they know are real. Whatever you're going through in your own life—personal attacks, struggles—God is the same, regardless. And his Word's never going to change.



That's what we're testifying about. We're not saying, "Look at P.O.D. and the success we've had." We're saying that God is the same from the day we started to the day we finish, and God is good always.

7) What does P.O.D. encourage people to do and be? _____

8) How does this relate to the saying that “Christianity is a big part of my life?” _____

9) Are they testifying about P.O.D.’s success? _____ Explain: _____

STRENGTH OF MY LIFE

P.O.D.

Yo! Eternal rhythms in your system so clear.
No negative take your isms stay cleared
We keep it lovely, give you want you want hear (no you won't hear)
And Matisyahu in the house, stand clear.
P.O.D. in the house, stand clear.
If Jah is for me, tell me whom I gon' fear? (no I won't fear)
And Jah of Jacob, deserving of my love
And God of Isaac, bring blessings from above
Hashem of Abraham will show me the way
I go down on my knees and this is what I pray.

Strength Of My Life, whom shall I dread?
When them evildoers approach to devour my flesh.
Even if there would be an army against me,
My heart would not fear.

Steer clear from weird vibes.
Chuck a spear these evil guys must realize,
Even if there would rise a war against me.
In this I trust, it's a must.
Elevated is my head, above my enemy.
Surround me with the song of glory
(Yeah, Song of glory, Yeah, ohhh)

Take away the scales from my eyes
Anoint your love upon my life
Have mercy on my soul and hear me when I cry
Do not abandon me, and don't forsake me
Lead me on the path of integrity

Even if there would be an army against me,
My heart would not fear.
Strength Of My Life, whom shall I dread?
When them evildoers approach to devour my flesh.

Back them up against the wall, stumble and fall then battle y'all
And stand tall, show me favor when I call Oh-oh
Back them against the wall, stumble and them fall
Battle y'all and stand call, show me favor when I call
Oh-oh-oh, yo, Matisyahu, P.O.D.
Eternally, with his majesty
Dwelling in the songs of glory
Dwelling with the song of glory