

WEEK TWO



Where Is God?

It's tempting to assume that when troubles come into our lives, we must have done something to deserve God's judgment. We can also be tempted to believe that this circumstance proves that God doesn't love us, isn't interested in us, or can't be real.

There are many examples we see from Scripture of God being close to those facing hardships. David wrote about this from his own perspective in Psalm 34:18 : "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." David was described in Scripture as "a man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14) and yet he faced circumstances that we would describe as incredibly harsh. Some of the hardships David faced were a result of his own poor choices. Some of those hardships were simply circumstances in his life. Yet over and over again, written in many of the Psalms, we see David's prayers and praises to God in the midst of his circumstances. We see the full range of his negative emotions represented, and yet he is comforted in God's loving presence.

In Psalm 13, David writes:

¹How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?

²How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?

³Look on me and answer, Lord my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,
⁴and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

⁵But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.
⁶I will sing the Lord's praise,
for he has been good to me.

How do we see David respond in the face of personal tragedy? Have you ever found yourself crying out to God in this same way? What do you notice about David's perspective change in verse 6?

It might seem like God is nowhere to be found when we face our darkest hours. But David found a way to trust in God's protection and provision even when he faced hardships. What would it look like to try to see your situation differently, to look for the ways God has come near and to "trust in his unfailing love" as you process what you're going through? Maybe for you it's a simple prayer asking God to show you where he's at work in this circumstance. Maybe asking God, "What good can come from this situation?" is a question he longs to answer. Perhaps he wants to show you that he's near to you, that he hears your cries, and that he wants to lift the burden from you.

One helpful (though sometimes painful) question to ask when we face hardships is “**What is this circumstance revealing in me?**” Hard times show us aspects of ourselves that we would not otherwise see, and this knowledge equips us for the future. **As you reflect, can you see either answers to these questions or knowledge that has come through this season?**

Building on last week’s progress, what healthy habits will you pursue this week? Is there anything you’d like to add to the list or to continue doing from last week? If this isn’t a habit for you already, consider adding a prayer practice to your healthy habits. Try prayerfully asking yourself these questions throughout your week. This could be through journaling, speaking to God aloud, or just thinking through what you’re experiencing in the moment and asking God to meet you there.

- When have I felt true joy today?
- What has troubled me today?
- What has challenged me today?
- Where and when did I pause today to breathe and reflect?
- Have I noticed God’s presence in any part of my day?

God Is Near: Reminders of God's Presence As You Work Through Your Circumstances

Find resources at [NPMCare.org/Focus](https://www.npmcare.org/focus)