

November 20, 2005

WHAT TO DO WHEN GOD SEEMS FAR AWAY

Psalm 13

What is this a picture of?

It is a spiral stair case. But it is also how a person feels who is struggling in depression or a depressed episode in their life. They feel trapped, spiraling down deeper and deeper. It is a fearful place. You don't know how to get off the stair case. You don't know how long it will last. The worst is on that staircase, God seems so very far away.

Depression Statistics: General Fact Information

_ In any given year, about seven percent - between 13 million and 14 million people - will experience a depressive disorder.

_ Of those who develop depression, only about 20 percent will receive adequate treatment.

_ About 16 percent of adults will experience depression at some point in their life.

_ About 97 percent of those reporting depression also reported that their work, home life and relationships suffered as a result.

The struggle that most believers who have never been depressed fail to understand is that you can be diligently following the forgiver and still struggle with depression or depressed episodes. Today name it claim theology and easy believism has left in its wake devastated individuals who feel trapped and judged by other believers and worse yet, they fell like God is far, far away from them.

You can be a man or woman after God's own heart and feel like he is far away form you.

 **TO TRULY BE PEOPLE OF THE PRESENCE, WE MUST DISCOVER HOW TO FIND HIS PRESENCE EVEN WHEN HE SEEMS FAR AWAY!**

T. S. We are going to turn once again to the life of David, because David knew what it was like to be on the spiral staircase. He knew periods of discouragement and depression.

We'll look for help from the lessons of man who said things like this.

Ps 6:3

3 My soul is in anguish. How long, O LORD, how long? NIV

Ps 31:10

10 My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; NIV

Ps 38:8

8 I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart. NIV

Psalms 13

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and every day have sorrow in my heart?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

3 Look on me and answer, O LORD my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death;

4 my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

5 But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.

6 I will sing to the LORD,
for he has been good to me.

I. Do what you know you should do.

- Despite how you feel.
- Despite the circumstances
- Despite the pain the anguish
- Despite the dryness.

Choose to do what you know you should do.

Ps 13:5 But I trust in your unfailing love;

- This means we continue partnering with Him
- This means we continue seeking his presence in the mornings
- This means we keep running back to him through out the day

Even when he seems far away. Even when we don't feel like we are connecting with him.

This is a choice. We must choose to trust even when he seems far away. It is scary. But it is often the only way to discover his presence once again. We have to make that leap of faith, we have to fall back into his arms.

Are you willing to keep doing what you know you should do even when he seems far away?

II. Cling to what you know is true.

Many of the spiritual battles and emotional battles we face in our lives are in reality battles for our mind.

In Romans Paul revealed the renewing of our minds was critical our transformation.

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will. NIV

We got to hold on tight to what we know is true.

David said...

Ps 13:5 my heart rejoices in your salvation.

In Ephesians

- He chose me before the creation of the world to be holy and
- He adopted me as his sons or daughter through Jesus Christ,
- In him I am redeemed, forgiven.
- He has lavished the riches of His grace upon me.
- I am seated with him in the Heavenly places.

- I am a co-heir with Him.
- I am His.

III. Keep Singing Praise to God

Praise is often an emotional experience. Sometimes when your heart is "bubbling" you overflow with praise, and you can't help but sing to God what you're feeling in your heart. When that happens, it's wonderful.

However, even during those times when our heart isn't "bubbling," we should continue to worship him. Even when our heart isn't bubbling, we should lift up our hands to him. Even when he seems far away, we should continue to sing our praise to him.

This is what David did.

Ps 13:6 I will sing to the LORD, for he has been good to me. NIV

Our voice of worship in the darkness is like a candle of light that leads us back to his presence. No matter how dark it is, a candle cast light.

Why sing?

- Because he has been good to us.
- Because singing is emotional, it ministers to our emotions when we sing of our God's goodness.

Think of how your favorite worship song impacts you. Think of how that hymn lifts you.

CONCLUSION

There are cycles to the Christian life. Over the course of time, our feelings will go up and down. There will be times when you feel close to God, and times when you feel like he is far, far away. That's inevitable. We don't have to be driven by our feelings. We can be driven by faith. Even during those times when God seems distant, we can experience the power of his presence in our daily life.