



CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

WHERE IS GOD WHEN I'M DEPRESSED?

By Talasi Guerra

How many times have you trudged through your day under the heavy burden of depression, loneliness, and defeat? For me, it has been too many to count. If you have walked this journey or are currently walking it, you've probably asked yourself *Where is God in all of this?* many times.

You are not alone.

Where is God in depression? It's an age-old question. I was struck by this recently as I journaled through Psalm 13. In it, the psalmist David talks openly about feeling dejected and abandoned by God. As I read through line after line, I couldn't believe how accurately his words (which were penned thousands of years ago in a different time and culture) described my experience with depression and anxiety.

David begins: *How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?* (Psalm 13:1)

How often do we feel like this? If you're anything like me, you've asked these kinds of questions time and again. *How long is this season going to last, God? How long until life feels livable again?*

David continues: *How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart?* (v. 2)

Man, David, you get me! My thoughts can be my own worst enemy. I wrestle with them every single day. I obsess over minute imperfections, and I let irrational ideas drive me to the edge of insanity. When not kept in check, my thoughts can wreak so much havoc on my life that I just want to give up—and when you're already carrying around sorrow in your heart day after day, intrusive thoughts can be nearly impossible to defeat.

In verse 3, David pleads with God for an answer: *Look on me and answer, Lord my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death...* Poor David just wants God to look at him. He feels so deserted and demoralized that a simple acknowledgment of his existence would be enough to keep him going. He's ready to give up and *sleep in death*.

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Then something happens that just blows me away. Verse five begins with three small words that change everything. *But I trust ...*

Come again, David? You're depressed. Your thoughts are tormenting you. You are being hunted and defeated by your enemies. You feel utterly abandoned by God—and your response is: *But I trust in your unfailing love?*

Can I say those words when I am in the depths of depression? Can you? David could.

How? How could he trust God's unfailing love amid such sorrow and despair? Here's what I think: I think he could because he chose to recognize his flawed thinking. He chose to trust God's truth rather than the lies poisoning his heart. He actively refuted those lies and reminded himself of what was true and real.

Not only that, but David chose joy. To be clear, he did not feel joy, but amid his brokenness and pain, he chose joy. He spoke it and made his heart believe it. He decided to want joy and then said, *"My heart rejoices in your salvation."*

David could choose joy because of what God has done and who God is. David was so convinced that deliverance and salvation would come from God that he could momentarily shelve his feelings to cling to the truth.

At that moment, he worshiped God: *I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me* (v. 6). Worship takes your eyes off you and your woes and points them to God. It increases your gratitude and puts things into perspective.

This was certainly the case for David. Throughout this psalm, he poured out his feelings of anguish and isolation. Yet, in the end, he could still say *"...for he has been good to me."* He addressed his irrational thoughts head-on and essentially said, "No. I'm not going to exist within these lies. God hasn't abandoned me. He has been good to me."

Where is God when I'm depressed? He is right here, beside me, ready to remind me of his goodness when I am ready to say ...but I trust.

PRAYER

Dear Father, when my thoughts and feelings sometimes overwhelm me, I wonder if You have forgotten about me—if You can see my pain. Help me to look to You and Your word for hope and joy. I want to trust You, Lord. Please help me. In Jesus' name, amen.

REFLECTION

- Journal through Psalm 13. Begin with *But I trust...?*, *How long, Lord?*, or *Where is God in all this?*

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