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PSALM 42:1-11

LONGING FOR GOD



THIS WEEK'S focus

At some point, you have probably found yourself in a situation in which you needed to coach yourself to not give up. Maybe it was during a tough basketball practice, in a difficult class you felt like throwing in the towel on, or while reading a book you needed to get through but didn't enjoy. In the psalm we will study this week, the author coaches—even commands—himself to put His hope in God amid a very difficult circumstance. In his pain, he resolves to praise the Lord—a reminder we all need. Through this psalm, we will discover that the Lord's presence brings hope, even when we go through difficult times.



CENTRAL truth

God's presence brings hope, even when we go through difficult times.



EXPLORE

scripture

PSALM 42:1-11

PSALM 42:1-5

For the choir director. A Maskil of the sons of Korah. **1** As a deer longs for flowing streams, so I long for you, God. **2** I thirst for God, the living God. When can I come and appear before God? **3** My tears have been my food day and night, while all day long people say to me, “Where is your God?” **4** I remember

this as I pour out my heart: how I walked with many, leading the festive procession to the house of God, with joyful and thankful shouts. **5** Why, my soul, are you so dejected? Why are you in such turmoil? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God.

PSALM 42:6-8

6 I am deeply depressed; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. **7** Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your

breakers and your billows have swept over me. **8** The LORD will send his faithful love by day; his song will be with me in the night—a prayer to the God of my life.

PSALM 42:9-11

9 I will say to God, my rock, “Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about in sorrow because of the enemy’s oppression?” **10** My adversaries taunt me, as if crushing my bones, while all day long they say to me,

“Where is your God?” **11** Why, my soul, are you so dejected? Why are you in such turmoil? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God.

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PSALM 42:1-11
CONVERSATION

questions

▶ READ PSALM 42:1-5.

.01 Why does the psalmist compare himself to a deer that is longing for a flowing stream?

.02 Share about a time you felt a longing like the psalmist's. What makes times like these so difficult?

.03 In verse 5, what does the psalmist command himself to do? Why does this matter?



GIVE AN ANSWER

Throughout this psalm, the author reminds himself of the Lord's faithfulness and resolves to put his hope in the Lord amid what he's going through. We can learn from this. There will certainly be moments when our grief is intense and we feel completely overwhelmed. This psalm certainly reveals that two things can be true at once: we can be confused and disheartened by our current circumstance and yet also command ourselves to put our hope in God. Our grief is an opportunity to talk to the Lord honestly in prayer. The same psalm that includes the sentence "I will still praise him" also asks, "Why have you forgotten me?" We must cling to the hope of God's gracious character and commit to praising Him, even when we want things to be different.

▶ READ PSALM 42:6-8.

.04 Why does the psalmist refer to geographical locations in verse 6?

.05 How can we remind ourselves of the Lord's faithfulness and care during difficult times?

▶ READ PSALM 42:9-11.

.06 What are the feelings that the psalmist expresses about the Lord? Do you feel as though you can honestly express feelings like this in your prayers? Why or why not?

.07 In verse 11, why does the psalmist repeat his question from verse 5?

.08 Read Ephesians 1:13-14. As believers, why can we rely on the Lord's presence with us?



GIVE AN ANSWER

In verse 6, the psalmist acknowledges that he is deeply depressed, and his response is to put his hope in the Lord. This does not mean that we should respond to depression by saying we should “just pray about it.” When it goes beyond occasional, passing sadness, depression is a serious medical condition. Yes, we should seek the Lord and wise spiritual advice. But in seeking the Lord, we should remember that He has graciously given us people and resources to get the help we need. If you think you may be suffering from depression, invite your parents or guardians into the situation, and with their guidance, consider scheduling an evaluation with a doctor or mental health professional.

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PSALM 42:1-11
NOW
what?



CENTRAL truth

God's presence brings hope, even when we go through difficult times.

.09 Why is it hard to remember the Lord's presence with us in painful moments?

.10 What truths about God can we hold on to amid difficult situations?

.11 Who is one believer who has encouraged you during a difficult time? What are some ways you can thank her or him this week?

.12 What are some answered prayers that we can celebrate among us as a small group?

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE PSALM 42:1

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about humans?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

PSALM 42:1-5

DWELL

The psalmist compares his longing for the Lord to a deer's longing for water. He is experiencing a spiritual drought of sorts, and only the Lord can bring true satisfaction and nourishment to his soul. The psalmist's pain is obvious as he reflects on his pain. Maybe you can relate to the psalmist's intense grief and often look back desirably on better times. But just as the author does in verse 5, we must coach—even command—ourselves to put our hope in the Lord.



How does the psalmist respond to his own suffering and grief?



What would it look like for you to practice putting hope in the Lord during a difficult moment?

MEMORIZE

Using colored pencils or pens, creatively write out Psalm 42:1 on a piece of paper. Read the verse out loud five times. Finally, try to say it out loud five times without looking, trying to picture it in your mind instead.

PRAY

Lord, in You, I can have hope when times are difficult. Please remind my heart of Your presence and care for me.

day 2

PSALM 42:6-8

DWELL

The psalmist is far from home and in a place of intense grief. Using the image of overwhelming waters, the author gives a picture of how swallowed up in grief he truly is. Nevertheless, he chooses to have faith in the covenant God of Israel. Just because we're going through something difficult does not mean that the Lord has abandoned us or is no longer faithful. In our heartbreak, pain, and sadness, we can have hope in a gracious and promise-keeping God who cares for us.



How can you relate to the psalmist's grief in this psalm? How can you bring your burdens to the Lord in prayer?



What does this passage teach you about God's faithful love?

MEMORIZE

Type out Psalm 42:1 in the Notes app on your phone or another device. Take a screenshot of it and set it as your lock screen or wallpaper.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your faithfulness toward me. Help me to be merciful toward those who are suffering in my life.

day 3

PSALM 42:9-11

DWELL

Though he calls God his Rock, the psalmist also directly questions Him. He feels abandoned and forgotten by the Lord. There are moments when, in our suffering, we may feel this way too. The questions show us the psalmist's desire for the Lord to act on his behalf. Unlike the taunts of the psalmist's enemies suggest, the Lord is not incapable of coming to his aid. But once again, the psalmist repeats what was said in verse 5. In moments when we feel abandoned and forgotten by the Lord, we must remind ourselves time and again of the truth about God. His character is good and we can have hope in Him.



Why do the psalmist's enemies taunt him? What does their taunt mean?



Who is someone having trouble that you can encourage with the truth of this passage?

MEMORIZE

Set reminders on your phone to read Psalm 42:1 three times each day (such as in the morning, the afternoon, and the evening).

PRAY

Gracious God, thank You for allowing me to be a child in Your family. Enable me to praise and obey You, no matter what I go through.

day 4

PSALM 34:18

DWELL

This verses emphasizes the Lord's presence with those who feel brokenhearted and crushed. The psalmist who penned Psalm 42 could most certainly relate to the feeling of being crushed—and many of us do as well. Life can feel overwhelming, and, in our pain, we aren't sure how to move forward. Know that the Lord is not waiting for us to get our act together so that He can be present with us. In our grief, and in our sadness, He is near.



Do you find yourself doubting the Lord's presence during difficult times? Why or why not?



What does this verse teach you about the Lord?

MEMORIZE

Say the book, chapter, and verse number for Psalm 42:1 out loud several times. Then read aloud just the first few words of the verse. Do this a few times a day and see if you can memorize more each time.

PRAY

Lord, thank You for being near to the brokenhearted. Give me courage to share the hope that I have with those who feel crushed by their grief.

day 5

EPHESIANS 1:13-14

DWELL

In his letter to the believers at Ephesus, the apostle Paul assures them that they are sealed—like a letter or a scroll—with the Holy Spirit. Because of this, believers belong to the Lord and are guaranteed to experience the renewal of all things when Jesus returns. We have security in the Lord and His presence is always with us. And, there will come a day when we will enjoy His immediate presence forever. With this in mind, know that whatever you may be going will not be final.



How are you encouraged by the truth of the Holy Spirit's presence?



How can the truth of this verse give you courage no matter what you may be facing?

MEMORIZE

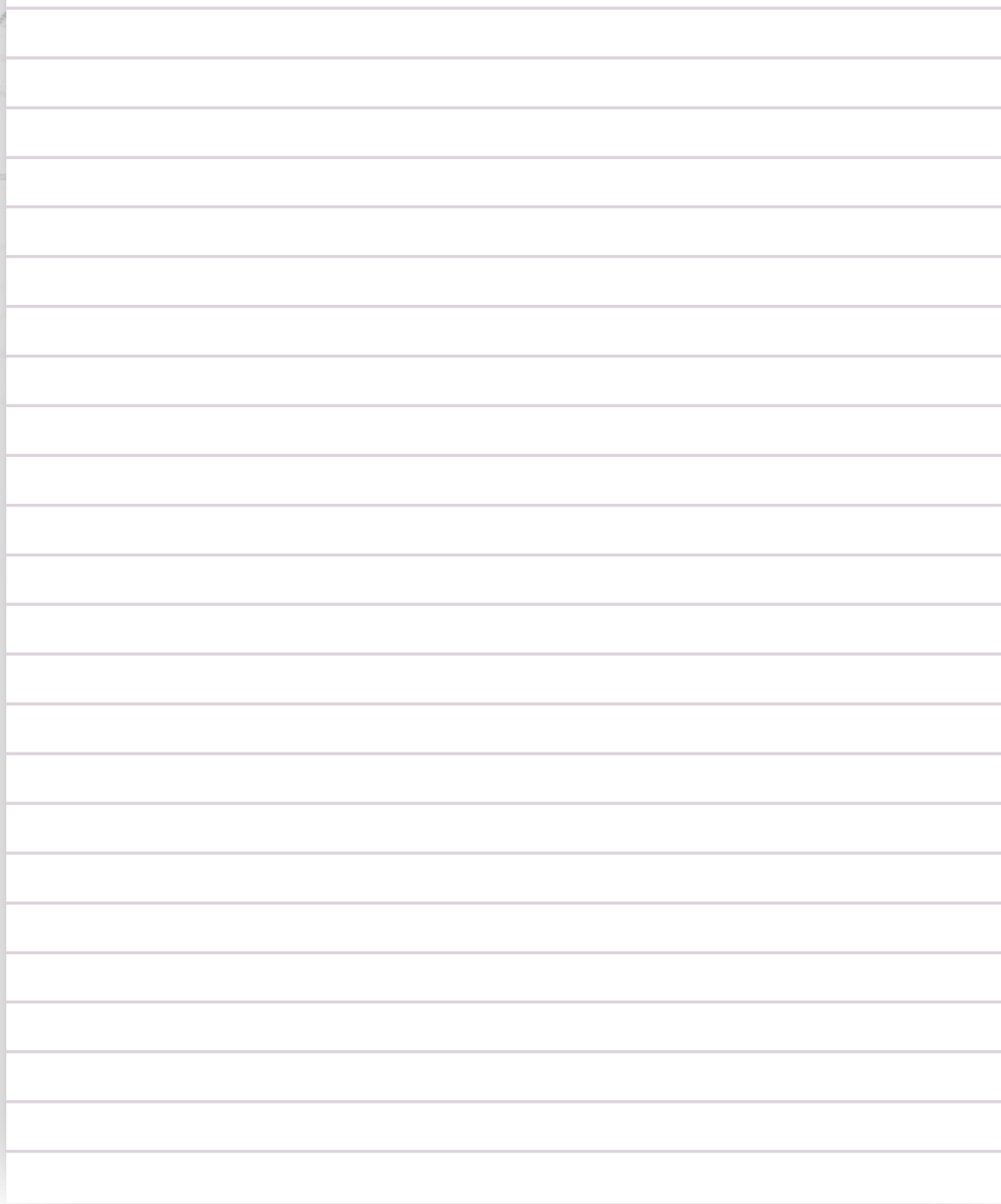
Write down the first letter of each word of Psalm 42:1 on a note card. At least five times today, see if you can say the verse just by looking at the letters.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for sealing me with Your Spirit. In Christ, I have hope and my suffering will not have the last word.

notes

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