

# When God feels far away

What do you do when God feels far away? What are the causes of this problem and what can you do to improve on your relationship with God especially when He feels far away? Before I dive into those questions let me show you a Psalm which goes even further. It is a Psalm that starts with the sentence Jesus quoted when He was dying on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" It's Psalm 22 and I'd like to dive into that before I continue to answer my question, because I think it's always good to see you're not the only one struggling with that daunting feeling. Even though the Psalm might sound a little depressing, I think it's also comforting to read that the 'man

*Psalm 22: 1-5 – "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?  
2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,  
and by night, but I find no rest.  
3 Yet you are holy,  
enthroned on the praises of Israel.  
4 In you our fathers trusted;  
they trusted, and you delivered them.  
5 To you they cried and were rescued;  
in you they trusted and were not put to shame."*

after God's heart' struggled with this feeling.

In verse 2 the Psalmist says that he cries by day, but that God does not answer. The moments you realize God feels far away can be very emotional and you might feel like you're about to cry or complain to God. Nights could be spent thinking and worrying what to do resulting in sleeplessness. Still nothing seems to happen, because God doesn't answer. One thing to realize here is the question: do you share your fear, anxiety or frustration with God? Are you only wondering and worrying, or are you crying out to God? I think this is important because God wants to have a relationship with us, which has to come from both sides. I think that I too often expect God to do something, while I don't invest a lot of time in Him. That is what is so important in the beginning of verse 5, where the psalmist looks at the fathers and says: "To you they cried and were rescued".

So after the sleepless nights the psalmist starts to think about his fathers and he notices something: they might have struggled with the same anxieties, but they kept on having faith and trusting in the Lord, despite their emotional situation. Look what happened: "they trusted, and you delivered them." In my opinion this is another important thing to keep in mind when you are not sure whether God is present in your life or not. They trusted that God wouldn't abandon His children and that even though it didn't feel like it, God was there. They were not put to shame. When you keep on trusting in the Lord, you won't be put to shame!

In verse 9 David is getting more personal when starts to think about how God made him and how God has cared for him since his birth and even before that. In the second half of verse 10 he says: "and from my mother's womb you have been my God." This might have made him think: so God cared for me since I have been in my mother's womb and from that day on He has been my God. Once David realized this He starts to talk to God: You cared for me, Lord. "Be not far from me, for

trouble is near, and there is none to help.” This might sound a little weird thinking about what he just said. He said that the fathers were not put to shame and that God delivered them, that God was his

*Psalm 22: 6-11 – But I am a worm and not a man,  
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.*

*7 All who see me mock me;  
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;*

*8 “He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him;  
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”*

*9 Yet you are he who took me from the womb;  
you made me trust you at my mother's breasts.*

*10 On you was I cast from my birth,  
and from my mother's womb you have been my God.*

*11 Be not far from me,  
for trouble is near,  
and there is none to help.*

God from the moment he was created and yet David still says: “there’s none to help.” How could he say that? I think it’s another example of the reality of knowing something, but not feeling the same. David knows his fathers were delivered by trusting the Lord, but he doesn’t feel the deliverance at that moment, because trouble is still near. That wouldn’t be the case if God delivered David, right? David goes on to say what trouble exactly is bugging him. But notice the plot twist in verse 21-22 (NKJV). What a transformation! He went all the way from “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” to “From you comes my praise in the great congregation.” How did he do that? What can we

*Psalm 22: 22, 23 – Save Me from the lion's mouth  
And from the horns of the wild oxen!*

*You have answered Me.*

*22 I will declare Your name to My brethren;  
In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.*

learn from this Psalm? This is where I want to get back to my initial question and try to answer it.

What do you do when God feels far away? Number one is the most important one in my opinion: you will have to trust the Lord and His promises. The promise of His steadfast love and the promise of His presence. When you keep trusting the Lord He will not put you to shame, just like the fathers weren’t put to shame. The second question I want to answer is: “Why does God feel far away? Is it because of me, or God?” When I look at myself and answer this question in my situation I’ll have to be honest with myself. I didn’t spend much time with God, I didn’t invest much time in Him. I think this is the root of the problem: God is not far away, I just didn’t expand my relationship with Him, which causes us to drift apart emotionally.

I cannot emphasize this enough that being a Christian is all about building a relationship with God. This means that faith will not come on a plate from Heaven. Even though you cannot do anything about your salvation, you can do something about your bond with God and that means investing time in Him, telling Him about what bothers you and what excites you, what makes you angry and

*James 4: 8a – Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.*

what or who disappoints you. This way James 4:8 can become a reality for you and me.