

When I'm Disappointed with God's Timing

In Psalm 13, David, the man after God's own heart, was on the verge of despair. Do you remember such a time? God did not act when you thought He should or in the way He should act. Praying for healing for a sick wife...nothing. Faithful to serve God, but reputation slandered. Praying for change, and it comes...yet in a different way that you pictured. No job to support family? Spiritual dryness or addiction or your child is...?

Where do I go when I'm **disappointed** in God? Especially in His timing.

Most of the 150 Psalms fall into one of three categories, *lament*, *petition* (prayer), or *worship* (praise/thanksgiving). *Lament*, the voice of raw emotions; *petition*, the voice of asking, dependence, awareness of need; *worship*, the voice of enthusiastic love. In **one** Psalm of only six verses, **Psalm 13** weaves together all three as a powerful model for how we do life with God when life pushes and shoves, and we spiral down.

1. **The Voice of LAMENT** (Psalm 13:1-2): David complained about how God treated Him, *and also* chose to lean hard into God with every ounce of his disappointment. David brought all his honest, raw pain with Him into God's presence. No careful wording to avoid "offending" God. God meets us in our raw emotions (He already knows all our thoughts anyway).

Four times David bemoans God's failure to act in a timely manner, according to David's sense of timing, "*How long, O LORD...*" *Lament Psalms* are honest, vulnerable. God invites us to bring to God our authentic emotions of anger, bargaining, or grief. Even though they are an inaccurate view of life. I call these the "*poor-me*" Psalms because they often reflect this self-focus prodded by internal or external pain.

Lament expresses honest doubt about God. God seems to have failed us. Although such thoughts reflect a temporarily broken inner spiritual compass, don't bury these feelings! Even if they are inaccurate, they are **ours**. Our Father experiences great pleasure when His children climb up on His lap and pour out our hearts. It's who He is. Yes, life often deals us bad cards. But how do we play our cards?

These opportunities present God with a powerful means to move us toward fuller spiritual life...if we lean in. Take off the fig leaf. Don't hide. Don't whitewash or sanitize your feelings or words. Bring all these raw emotions into God's presence, just as they are, raw, unfiltered, like David. "*How long, O LORD, will I be forgotten, abandoned, left alone to my own thoughts, and defeated?*"

As I carefully examine each of these phrases in verses 1-2, *none* of them may actually align with God-Reality. Could our God ever forget His beloved child or friend? Is God really hiding His face? If you wonder, return to the *three essential questions* to reorient.

These powerful emotions may not always be *accurate*, but in lament they are *authentic*, both *real* and *raw*. Self-focus distorts our reality (note the seven first person pronouns in two verses). Whatever we are feeling, whatever words we are thinking, bring these with us as we rush into God's presence. He can take it! A love

relation only thrives in emotional honesty. God is not fragile! And He loves us unconditionally.

2. **The Voice of PETITION** (Psalm 13:3-4): We also cannot settle in *lament*, drinking our bitter dregs at our private pity-party. We must rush to God with our desires or we take on a victim mentality. God is **good**, always for us, able to act in *this* horrific circumstance for our highest and best. God does good...always... because He is good. Yes, this leaves us with mystery and confusion...and doubt when we insist on our own spin.

What boldness in this God-seeker!

“Look.” “Answer.” “Give light.” All are commands to our sovereign Lord.

How come?

God slipped His wedding ring on our finger. Petitions are pleas asking for what we need, and what only our Groom can supply. God delights to give us good things (James 1:17). It's who He is. As I ask, He either answers or my verbalizing often brings me light so I adjust my focus. At its essence, prayer of petition is like a child rushing into a good father's presence and asking. It's basic language, never requiring flowery words. God insists that we ask Him, or the powerful pull of pain will pull us back to lament (3b-4).

Did you notice what's happening with David? David leaned hard into God with His doubts and pain. Then he leaned hard into God with his perceived needs. Yet once more he chooses to lean in hard to God.

3. **The Voice of PRAISE** (Psalm 13:3-4): David leans in close, face to face with the living God with the ringing enthusiasm of worship. And **no** circumstance has changed. From pouting to praise! Trust. Unfailing love. Rejoicing. Singing because the Lord has been “*good to me*.” This is not simply a theological statement like in Psalm 73:1. It's the ringing declaration of one of God's beloved people designed as a worshipper. David has come home, to our only true home, resting in the God who is for us...always.

Benefits: *Lament Psalms* have recently helped me immensely in my Christian life, although for decades they had little value to me. *First*, they give me permission to wobble when life slaps me around and God seems slow to respond. As someone who has walked with Jesus for a long time, it's still OK when I feel sorry for myself. Yet bring this self-focus in all its rawness quickly to God. I don't have to first get my act in order before coming to God. I don't have to first clean up. God can handle my raw feelings, even when they are not accurate, just so they are honest.

Second, Psalms as a whole, and *Lament Psalms* in particular, have given me language to express to God the whole range of my emotions. I feel these emotions, yet it's tough for me to put them into words. Psalms discloses the whole range of human emotions, from deep despair to restful petition and exultant praise. Psalms lends me language to express.

Third, Psalm 13 has become my life-posture, a model to **melt** into His embrace. If I'm struggling, I embrace Him with *lament* and move to *petition* and *praise*. If I'm in need, with *petition* and move to *praise*. If soaring through life in this season with the wind filling my sails, *praise*. **Which season are you in now?**