

HOPE IN GOD

Psalm 42

To the choirmaster. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah.

- ¹As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.
- ²My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.
When shall I come and appear before God?
- ³My tears have been my food
day and night,
while they say to me all the day long,
“Where is your God?”
- ⁴These things I remember,
as I pour out my soul:
how I would go with the throng
and lead them in procession to the house of God
with glad shouts and songs of praise,
a multitude keeping festival.
- ⁵Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation ⁶and my God.
- My soul is cast down within me;
therefore I remember you
from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,
from Mount Mizar.
- ⁷Deep calls to deep
at the roar of your waterfalls;
all your breakers and your waves
have gone over me.
- ⁸By day the Lord commands his steadfast love,
and at night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.
- ⁹I say to God, my rock:

“Why have you forgotten me?
Why do I go mourning
because of the oppression of the enemy?”
¹⁰As with a deadly wound in my bones,
my adversaries taunt me,
while they say to me all the day long,
“Where is your God?”
¹¹Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.

WELCOME: *Fixing Our Focus*

Share with the group a Bible verse you use as a source of encouragement, either for yourself or others. Explain to the group the significance of the verse you have chosen.

WORSHIP: *Adoring Our God*

Suggested songs:

As the Deer by Marty Nystrom
Still by Reuben Morgan (Hillsong Worship)
Oceans (Where Feet May Fail) by Joel Houston et al. (Hillsong United)
Living Hope by Phil Wickham

WORD: *Understanding the Word*

Lesson Aim: Members will decide to hope in God in times of discouragement.

Introduction

“Just grin and bear it.”

Some people give that advice when you are facing difficult circumstances. Just smile and accept things as they are since there is nothing you could do to make things better. Freddie Aguilar said that, too, in his popular song, “Tawanan Mo ang Iyong Problema.”

Psalm 42 goes against this advice. The psalmist encourages us to talk honestly to God about our feelings and to hope in him.

Leader: Lead in reading Psalm 42 aloud together. Then read the paragraph on the “Key Verse.”

Key Verse: The psalm is called a “maskil” which comes from the Hebrew verb that means to instruct. It begins with “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God”—an instruction to hunger and thirst for God, especially in difficult times.

Psalm 42:1-5. Theme: _____

Mark all nouns and pronouns for God with a triangle (Δ) in verses 1-5.

1. What do you learn about God in these verses? List some implications of the fact that our God is a “living God.”

2. Based on verses 1-2, explain how urgent and vital was the psalmist’s longing for God?

**“Hunger you can
palliate, but thirst
is awful, insatiable,
clamorous,
deadly.”
- C.H. Spurgeon**

3. What are the causes of the deep sorrow that the psalmist was experiencing? (*vv. 3-4*)

4. In verse 5, the psalmist appeared to be chiding his own self. What did he say? Why?

In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 1-5.

Psalm 42:6-11. Theme: _____

Mark all nouns and pronouns for God with a triangle (Δ) in verses 6-11.

5. What do you learn about God in these verses? List and explain the different ways that the psalmist regards God (e.g. “my God”).

6. Explain the metaphor the psalmist used in verse 7 and relate it to the misery he was experiencing.

7. Explain how the psalmist fought against the heaviness of discouragement (v. 8).

8. In verses 9-10, the psalmist refers to God as “my rock” (i.e. a place of safety, strength and security). And then he asks, “Why have you forgotten me?” Explain what is going on here in this seeming contradiction.

In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 6-11.

Questions for Adults

1. Were you ever at a point in your life when you felt that God had “forgotten” about you? If you are willing, please share this experience with the group. Share, too, how God helped and sustained you during this time.
2. Verse 8 says, “at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.” It is an example of singing our prayers during times of discouragement. List some songs and hymns that you could pray to God during such times.
3. The psalmist convinced himself to “hope in God.” What are the things that you need to do on a regular basis in order to strengthen your hope in God?
4. Individually and as a group, pray back this psalm to God. You could start by saying something like:

O Lord, as a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you...

5. Pray for GCF (Prayer requests supplied by the Leader).

Questions for the Youth

1. Have you ever messed up so bad that it felt like the end of the world? Have you ever felt like an outcast from society because many people didn’t agree with something you posted on social media and have said mean things towards you? Have you ever felt that level of pain where you feel choked and your heart sank? Whether that feeling was caused by you, or from others around you, Psalm 42 resonates with you in that feeling.

David’s cry to God, “why have you forgotten me?” resounded with one of Jesus’ last words on the cross. How does it feel knowing that both the patriarchs of the Bible and Jesus Christ himself have felt that level of depression and sorrow?

2. Despite this depression, David recounted to himself God’s power and character. One way to lift our heads is to remind ourselves of God’s salvation. How can you pray and remind one another of God’s salvation?

Pray the Psalm as a group: “Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.”

Questions for Children

1. The psalmist described himself thirsting for God as a deer thirsts for water. How about you? How much do you want God? What can make you desire God more?
2. Have you gone through a difficult time in your life? How did God help you during that time?
3. This psalm teaches us that we can always turn to God, even if we feel that he has “forgotten” us. Who do you go to when you feel sad or lonely? Develop a habit of going to God in prayer whenever you feel down.