

Practical, Spiritual Solutions for Those Times You Feel Far From God

God created you and me for intimacy with Himself. Intimacy with God is possible! But that feeling of being close to God may often seem to last about as long as a summer thunderstorm—refreshing and powerful, but short-lived. So what do you do when you feel distant from God?

As integrated human beings, our intellect and our feelings are both important. Serious study of biblical truth is life-changing, but if devoid of emotionally-enriching experience, it can become dry and empty. Spirit-infused times of being overwhelmed with the presence of God are also life-changing, but without Scripture and solid truth as a foundation, the house of one's life will collapse.

Being a disciple of Jesus is *not* an intellectual agreement with a set of principles. It is also *not* an unending emotional feeling. Your salvation, your standing with God, your connection with Jesus, is not an intellectual mind game nor an unpredictable emotional roller-coaster.

Perhaps that's one reason marriage is such an important object lesson of our relationship with God. Relationship is so much more than "statements of truth." And feelings come and go. A covenant-level commitment is the only thing strong enough to last through the ups and downs.

So how does that relate to times when you feel distant from God?

Feelings provide immensely valuable information, but they comprise a very poor and dangerous guide. Feelings are real, but they are not the whole truth.

Feeling distant from God is an invitation to pause and look deeper, but that feeling is not the whole truth. Look for the rest of the truth.

Survey Questions to Ask

From Scripture and from the experience of believers through the centuries, we know many things that can impact your experience of the presence of God. If He seems distant, it's useful to survey your life for the areas we know may be a factor. Here are just a few possibilities.

1. **Physical lifestyle.** Are you physically tired? A good night's sleep may greatly change your outlook on life – and God. Is your brain sluggish from no exercise or a sugary meal full of processed food? A walk outdoors or a protein-and-veggies meal may significantly change things.
2. **Known sin.** Has the Holy Spirit been putting His finger on something in your life and asking you to let Him change you there? Have you been resisting? Continuing in rebellion against what the Spirit wants to do will eventually send Him away. This is not about perfection! It's about agreeing with Him and cooperating with Him in changing you. It's about continuing to take one step forward.
3. **Momentary troubles.** Your troubles may seem anything but momentary. But in the light of eternity, they are (2 Cor. 4:17). Don't mistake troubles as evidence that God is not with you. Could your experience simply be the "common" experience of people living in this messed-up world? (1 Pet. 5:9).
4. **Time to grow.** If they want to win, an athlete stretches his/her abilities every time they practice. Candidates for special forces units, such as the U.S. Navy SEALs, train in the most extreme conditions possible. God created you to fill a unique role in His kingdom; is this a period of training and growth?

If one of these questions, or another the Spirit brings to mind, resonates with you, pay attention. Get that sleep. Repent of sin if needed. Choose to get up again and do that training exercise. Seeing feelings as information can help guide you in seeing the next step to take.

Behind Enemy Lines

We still live in a world at war between the kingdom of God and Satan's kingdom of darkness. We get caught in the crossfire.

Our government sends its most elite soldiers into the most dangerous circumstances behind enemy lines. They are trusted to know what to do even if communication lines get disrupted.

God may be trusting you behind enemy lines. Early in our Christian walk, the special feelings and other goodies of relationship with God are often plentiful and exciting. But when God trusts you enough to use you, the feelings and emotional sense of connection may not be the same.

Can God trust you to remain faithful even if you don't see or hear Him as you're used to?

Keep Coming Back

Regardless of the reasons for feeling distant, keep coming back into His presence. That may look like:

- Praying with "loud cries and tears" as Jesus did when He was here (Heb. 5:7).
- Reading Scripture.
- Waiting in silence to hear God's voice.
- Reviewing how God has dealt with you in the past. (A journal can be of great help here.)
- Being with other believers who are seeking God.

Ask Jesus to interpret the situation for you. And get quiet long enough for Him to answer.

And most of all, keep doing the last thing God told you to do until He tells you differently. That's what faithfulness is all about.

Your Turn: *Have you been feeling distant from God? Which of these questions resonates most with you? Leave a comment below.* {eoa}

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This article originally appeared at .

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