

12 Ways to Overcome the Spiritual Blahs

A holy fire was ignited in your heart when you first met Jesus. You discovered true joy, peace and love. God sparked a spiritual hunger in you, which awakened a desire to pursue Him. You probably sensed an insatiable appetite for the Bible, you wanted to pray and you looked for every chance to fellowship with other Christians.

But the Holy Spirit's flame can smolder if you quench it or neglect it. This might be because you've allowed sin to control you, the busyness of life distracted you or trials and difficulties wore you down. But faith isn't measured by feelings. Sometimes our zeal cools because God is calling us deeper.

David said in Psalm 63:1b (NASB), "My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water." If you are in a dry season, don't despair. You might feel like you are in a spiritual rut, but God allows dry times to stir our thirst for Him. It means your roots are going to grow deeper!

If you are experiencing the spiritual blahs, here are some ways to pour fuel on your fire:

– **Count your blessings.** I have a normal prayer routine, but sometimes I set my prayer list aside and just thank Jesus for all His goodness. Psalm 103:2b (NASB 1995) reminds us: "Forget none of His benefits." Thankfulness keeps our hearts fresh. Listing all God's answers to prayer will adjust your attitude and remind you how totally dependent you are on Him.

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– **Spend some time in prayer and fasting.** Fasting has become a popular strategy for weight loss. But that shouldn't be our main goal when we engage in this discipline. When I fast, I do it to reprogram my spiritual GPS. Fasting has a way of tuning out distractions and strengthening our ability to hear God's voice. And fasting amplifies the power of prayer.

– **Go on a personal retreat.** It's difficult to hear God in the middle of a hectic daily routine. Our lives are way too noisy and overscheduled—and most of us are starved for silence. Figure out a way to go to a quiet place for a few days to get away from the chaos. Quiet has a therapeutic effect on the human soul.

– **Change your devotional plan.** It's good to have a discipline of daily Bible reading and prayer, but don't fall into a religious rut. Mix it up. There are great studies available online or in print to help you dive deeper into certain books of the Bible. And if you find yourself avoiding certain books (such as Job or Ezekiel, for example), get past your fears and read them anyway.

– **Find a mentor.** Every Joshua needs a Moses, and every Ruth needs a Naomi. But today we prefer the do-it-yourself method. Many Christians reach a juvenile level of spiritual growth, but without a coach they can't climb higher. Ask God to bring a mentor into your life who can offer wise advice and a good example to follow.

– **Read a challenging book.** It was actor Will Rogers who said: "A man only learns in two ways, one by reading, and the other by association with smarter people." I like to read books by dead Christians; even though they've gone to heaven, their wisdom is stored up for us. What a waste not to take advantage of it. The same is true about books by living authors—many of them have a message that will help you grow.

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– **Start sharing your faith.** There's nothing more exhilarating than leading someone to Jesus. Once you do it, your spiritual temperature will rise several degrees and you'll forget about your trivial problems. Pray that God will arrange divine appointments for you—at the store, in the gym, at your job or even online. Then, as a friendship develops, introduce the gospel.

– **Disciple a new believer.** When you teach a new Christian how to grow spiritually, you grow too. Being a mentor forces you to study the Bible so you can answer your disciple's questions. God will shatter your self-centeredness when you open your heart to a disciple and adjust your schedule to fit theirs.

– **Attend a conference or seminar.** Sometimes we need to get out of our normal surroundings and breathe different air. Christian conferences offer new friendships, new revelations from the Scriptures, practical training or a word of prophetic encouragement. These mountaintop moments are worth the expense because they can put you on a new pathway to spiritual growth.

– **Start a small-group Bible study.** Some Christians stay in consumer mode their whole lives, learning spiritual truth but never teaching it to anyone. It may be time for you to start investing in others instead of always being on the receiving end. Even if you are an introvert, overcome your fears, open your home and invite friends to study the Bible together.

– **Strengthen your connection to a local church.** Many Christians enjoy bashing the church these days. News flash: Jesus will never abandon His bride. The church is still God's instrument to reach the world, in spite of its spots and wrinkles. You will grow faster if you are linked to a community of imperfect believers. Move past your hurts and reconnect.

– **Go on a mission trip.** My overseas ministry journeys have

helped me grow spiritually more than anything else. Exposure to what God is doing in other countries will widen your perspective, increase your sensitivity to other cultures and crucify your selfishness. If you really want to grow in your faith, ask God for a missionary heart and go where He sends you—whether it's to a troubled neighborhood in your own city or somewhere on the other side of the world.

Don't let the spiritual blahs drag you down. I pray 2024 will be a year of growth for you. {eoa}

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