

God First: Building a Prayer-Centered Relationship with God – Week Seven

Abandonment!

What to Do with Seasons of Unanswered Prayer – Psalm 4:1-8

Main Idea: When God doesn't answer prayer, our confidence gets shaken, and we can feel abandoned by God. Of course, God hasn't really abandoned us. Rather this is a call to stay engaged with him with 4 specific spiritual disciplines.

1. *FACING ABANDONMENT – Seasons of unanswered prayer feel like we're being abandoned by God. Psalm 4:6-7*

- A. Background – There are six different kinds of Psalms in the book of Psalms.
 - 1. By far the majority are “Crisis” Psalms, a.k.a. “Individual Laments.”
 - 2. This Psalm is connected with Psalm 3: a) time of his life, and b) a.m. & p.m. prayers.
 - 3. David comes to God with three crises.
- B. Crisis number one – Israel experiences a devastating natural disaster.
 - 1. In most Psalms there is some sort of enemy...not here.
 - 2. The enemy seems to be a draught. 4:7
- C. Crisis number two – David experiences a spiritual problem.
 - 1. In the Old Testament draughts could be the result of sin. Deut. 28:23-24
 - 2. The king was responsible for rain. Note the prayers of other kings.
 - 3. The king received the rain through prayer.
 - 4. Either way, people view David as being personally responsible.
- D. Crisis number three – David experiences a leadership problem.
 - 1. David's senior leaders have gone after false gods to get rain.
 - 2. Their false gods were fertility deities.
- E. Reality – Unanswered prayer is a fact of life.
- F. Question – What is God up to?
 - 1. He is doing something for *us*.
 - 2. He is doing something for *our relationship*.

2. *FIGHTING FOR HOPE – Seasons of unanswered prayer are a call to think and feel differently about God. Psalm 4:1-7*

- A. We remember something about God – God always does what is right by us. 4:1
 - 1. What “God of my righteousness” means.
 - 2. How it applies.
- B. We remember something about us – God has set us apart, even though it seems otherwise. 4:3-5
 - 1. God set David apart for himself, but it led to pain.
 - 2. God set Jesus apart for himself, and it led to pain.
 - 3. Even though God sets us apart, we may experience pain.
- C. We remember something about sin – Moving away from Christ is disaster. 4:4a
- D. We remember something about the disciplines of the spiritual life – 4:4b-5
 - 1. Engaging in corporate worship.
 - 2. Finding joy in his presence.

3. *FINDING PEACE – Seasons of unanswered prayer are occasions for finding God's peace. Psalm 4:1, 8*

- A. David's Psalm doesn't end cleanly: “Problem over. We lived happily ever after.”
- B. But David does find peace: Note how the Psalm begins and ends. Relief and Sleep due to safety.