

☞ **When God Seems Distant**

Murphy's Laws:

**Nothing is as easy as it looks; everything takes longer than you think; if anything can go wrong it will.*

** The chance of the bread falling with the peanut butter and jelly side down is directly proportional to the cost of the carpet.*

** Any tool dropped while repairing a car will roll underneath to the exact center.*

** The repairman will never have seen a model quite like yours before.*

** If your horn accidentally gets stuck it will be when you're following a group of Hell's Angels on the freeway.*

--Talk about recently being troubled by some concerns. There was nothing I could do about it and it got me down.

Anticipating trouble is worse than trouble itself.

--Many are often troubled in various ways: \$\$; relationships; reputation; deadlines; temptations; uncertainty...

--The Bible gives many examples of people who were troubled...

In 1 Samuel 30:6 David was greatly distressed because the people were talking about stoning him...

In Luke 10:38-42 Martha was distracted by all the preparations for Jesus and his disciples. She came to Jesus and complained that her sister, Mary, wasn't helping. That's when Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things..."

Worried & Upset – anxious; troubled; disturbed; bothered; distracted... any of those sound familiar? Feel familiar?

--Bernard Meltzer... *Worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do but doesn't get you anywhere.*

☞ Luke 8:14 (**worry will strangle you spiritually**)

The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.

--Sir John Lubbock... *A day of worry is more exhausting than a day of work.*

☞ Matthew 6:25, 33 (**when you're troubled, turn to Jesus**)

do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear... seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Here's an important truth: *God knows your predicament*. He is there with you. He says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb.13:5).

☞ John 14:1 (***instead of worrying, trust Jesus***)

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.

When you're troubled, it's time to trust. It's time to turn to Jesus.

How to turn to Jesus when you're troubled:

☞ **Philippians 4:6-7**

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

☞ **Pray** - a conversation with God. When you're in that conversation with God, it's okay to ask questions. The bible writers did.

Psalms 10:1

Why, O LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

Psalms 22:1-2 (*Jesus quoted this from the cross*)

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? 2 O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer

Asking these kinds of questions may seem like lack of faith, but at least you're talking with God. You're turning in the right direction, rather just giving up and losing faith.

☞ **Petition** - a humble appeal to somebody who has the power to grant a request. Make sure you let God know what you need. Like last week, be sure to be specific.

No man ever got himself out of trouble until he first admitted he was in trouble.

Psalms 145:18

The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

Psalms 5:3

In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.

Call out to God with your need. Admit your trouble and your feelings about the situation. Ask God for help.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

God may not respond in the manner that you are hoping for. I've definitely experienced that. But he guarantees that he will bring comfort in the midst of trouble. And, here's a side-note: we should also comfort and encourage each other, especially when someone is going through a tough time.

☞ **Be thankful** – there's always something to be thankful for, so be sure to express gratitude to God when you're praying.

And, when God seems distant, you have to keep the faith. In the most troubling times, it's tempting to walk away from God, but that's a mistake. Even though it's hard to see, God keeps his promises.

Hebrews 4:14

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

☞ **Keep the faith.**

John 6:67-69

67 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

Where could I go, oh where could I go?

Seeking a refuge for my soul

Needing a friend, to help me in the end

Where could I go, but to the Lord?

Job said that even if God killed him, he would still trust in God. That's keeping the faith. I know at times things don't make any sense and we wonder what God is doing. We wonder why God doesn't intervene. But where else will we turn? Every other option is empty. Keep the faith.

Even when we can't see it, God keeps his promises, and, one of the things God promises is peace. Even in the midst of troubles, we can experience the peace of God. His peace goes beyond understanding.

When we are troubled and God seems distant, that's when we especially need to turn to God. We need to pray, having a conversation with the Lord. We need to quiet our minds from the distractions and busyness of life in order to hear God. This takes time. He speaks in the "still, small voice," or "the gentle whisper." (1 Kings 19:12.) When you're troubled and perhaps asking some of those difficult questions, God may respond with an answer. So, listen. He will give you peace in the middle of troubling times.

--Scott Krippayne... *"Sometimes he calms the storm; other times he calms his child."*

--Frances J. Roberts... *Finding God, you have no need to seek peace, for he himself is your peace.*

☞ **Pray and listen.** Make sure you are spending time with God. Ask him whatever questions are on your mind. Be honest with him. Tell him what you need. And listen.

You might want to **plan a personal retreat.** Take a day off and just spend time with ☞ God. Read your Bible. Listen to worship music. **Get away from distractions** and busyness. Be quiet for at least a half hour and wait for God to speak. Listen.

When God seems distant, it's almost always because we need to draw closer to him. He ☞ never changes. He never leaves or forsakes us. We need to **reach out**, pray, listen, express gratitude and experience the peace of God.

When God seems distant, he's really not. The Lord is near. (Psalm 145:18)

☞ Now, we can all **help** with this. Remember that verse about God's comfort? He comforts us so that we can, in turn, comfort others. So, before you go today, reach out to someone else, either with your own need, or to be an encouragement to them.