

In God We Trust: Are You Sure?

Psalm 118:1-6

Introduction:

God is real no matter how you feel. Remember that. And here's why: It's easy to worship God when ...

- things are great
- you are surrounded by others of like mind
- you walk on a quiet beach or sit on top of a mountain

Those times, however, may be the exception rather than the rule. My life isn't always great; my voice (more times than not) is alone rather than joined in chorus; and my mountaintop experiences are rare compared to nights in the valley. Hence the question,

How do you worship God when you don't "feel" like it?

How do you keep a relationship when He seems far away?

We're talking about the deepest level of worship and relationship. – To be able to praise Him in spite of pain ... - To thank Him in spite of trials ... - To trust Him when you don't understand ... - To love Him when He seems a million miles away ... That kind of faith isn't easy.

Discussion:

I. Friendship is Tested by Separation

- A. What's true in *human* relationships is also true in our spiritual relationship. The point: You have to work at your relationship with God and — you won't always *feel* close to Him. And that's when worship and faith gets difficult.
- B. There will be times when you will *feel* that God has ignored, abandoned, and forgotten you. And you're not the only one! **Ps.10:1; 22:1-2; 43:2A; 89:46.**
 1. **Truth:** God had not turned His back on them anymore than He will turn His back on you (**Deut.31:8; Heb.13:5**). But that doesn't mean you will never have *feelings* of separation.
 2. Have you ever prayed and *felt* nothing? Or gone through low tides when you *felt* God was distant? At those times we're tempted to ask, *What's wrong with me?* The answer: Perhaps nothing. It may be a natural and normal part of developing your faith and relationship with Him.
 3. **Key truth:** Beware of basing your faith upon feelings because ... your feelings will betray you!

II. When God Seems Distant

- A. **Job ...** There were times Job felt disconnected from God (**23:8-9**). His feelings of abandonment had nothing to do with sin, but were a test of his faith. And your faith may be equally tested. Will you continue to trust and obey when you don't *feel* His presence?
- B. **A common mistake — seeking an emotional experience rather than seeking Him!** If the *feeling* happens we conclude that God is with me. If it doesn't, we conclude that God doesn't care about me.

**Maybe God removes our feelings
so that we won't always depend on them.**

1. There were times when Job didn't *feel* close to God. Same with David. Yet even though their *feelings* were absent, their faith remained!
2. Feelings and facts are two different things. Sometimes there is beautiful harmony, but sometimes (due to our emotional state) the feelings are AWOL. And that's when you have to focus on the facts.
3. The fact is: God is always near. His presence in your life is too profound to be measured by your emotional ups and downs. I believe God wants you to sense His working in your life (**Phil.2:13**), but more—I believe He wants you to *trust* Him even when you can't *feel* Him.

C. **There will be life-situations that will stretch your faith to the max** — and if you go by *feelings* ...God seems to have abandoned you. Hence, the question: How do you praise Him when your life falls apart and Heaven is silent? How do you “fix your eyes on Jesus” when they are filled with tears?” You cry “Why?” and ... there is only **silence**. You do what Job did. And David. You have to walk by the *facts* when the *feelings* aren’t there.

III. 4 Things You MUST Do:

- A. **Tell God how you** _____. Job did (and held nothing back), **7:11**. God is such a trusted friend that you can tell Him anything. He can handle your anger, doubt, fear, grief, confusion, and questions. Like the trusted friend with whom you can share your heart, so it is with God.
1. As parents seek open dialogue with their children, so our Father wants the same from us.
 2. Until we do, He will continue to *feel* distant.
- B. **Focus on His unchanging** _____. Regardless of your circumstances, confess the facts you know to be true. You know God is good, that He loves you, and that He knows what you’re going through. In other words, ***never doubt in the dark what God has revealed in the light!*** **Job19:25** — “**For I know that my redeemer lives**”
- C. **Trust God to keep His** _____. On those days when you come up empty, discipline yourself to rely on His promises — not your emotions! In other words, don’t be troubled by trouble (**Job 23:11-12; Rom.8:28**). ***God is for you even when you don’t feel like He is.***
- D. **Remember what He has done for you** _____. If God never did another thing for you, He still deserves your best because ... **2 Cor.5:21; Isa.53:6; John 3:16**

Conclusion:

Your feelings will betray you! There are times when God seems distant because He *is* distant! It’s not that *He* has walked away, but *you* have! Sin removes us from a relationship with Him, **Isa.59:1-2**. Thus, you may *feel* disconnected because you *are* disconnected. But that isn’t God’s fault — it’s yours!

“For I know that my redeemer lives”