

How to Trust God Amidst Grief

Psalm 13

Main Idea:

Prayers of lament drive us to trust God amidst our grief.

Three movements of lament:

1. We must **turn** and **complain** to the Lord (vv. 1–2)

1. We must **ask** for help from the Lord (vv. 3–4)

1. We must **trust** in the steadfast love of the Lord
(vv. 5–6)

1. We must **turn** and **complain** to the Lord (vv. 1-2)

Text:

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

“1 How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?

2 How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?”

1. We must **turn** and **complain** to the Lord (vv. 1-2)

Quotes:

“You made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless, until they find their rest in You.”

- Augustine, *Confessions*

“It is precisely out of trust that God is sovereign that the psalmist repeatedly brings laments and petitions to the Lord...If the psalmists had already decided the verdict—that God is indeed unfaithful—they would not continue to offer their complaint.”

- Todd Billings, *Rejoicing in Lament*

1. We must **turn** and **complain** to the Lord (vv. 1-2)

Cross References:

“6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6-7

“6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”

1 Peter 5:6-7

2. We must **ask** for help from the Lord (vv. 3-4)

Text:

“3 Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,

4 lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him,” lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.”

2. We must **ask** for help from the Lord (vv. 3-4)

Quotes:

“Suddenly I was wrenched into a place I could never have imagined...I was forced to fall and fall into the abyss of grief. I was not ready for this. I was not given time to prepare for the loss of the one person who lit up my world. Boom, there I was, forced into a world of agony...I didn't know I could cry so hard...

I had to live in faith that God was in control, that Bonnie was with Jesus in heaven. I chose to believe the Bible, to believe that God knew, and now I needed to trust him...I felt I was being called to lay down everything for him in surrender.”

- Gary Witherall, *Total Abandon*

3. We must **trust** in the steadfast love of the Lord (vv. 3-4)

Text:

“5 But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

6 I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.”

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Quotes:

“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”

- C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

“I’ve always said that suffering is like a little ‘splash-over of hell,’ reminding us of what Christ rescued us from—like a tiny taste of what life could be like for all eternity, were it not for God’s graciousness.”

- Joni Eareckson Tada

3. We must **trust** in the steadfast love of the Lord (vv. 3-4)

Quotes:

“God sees fit that we should taste of that cup of which his Son drank so deep, that we might feel a little what sin is, and what his Son's love was. But our comfort is that Christ drank the dregs of the cup for us, and will succor us, so that our spirits may not utterly fail under that little taste of his displeasure which we may feel. He became not only a man but a curse, a man of sorrows, for us. He was broken that we should not be broken; he was troubled, that we should not be desperately troubled; he became a curse, that we should not be accursed. Whatever may be wished for in an all sufficient comforter is all to be found in Christ.”

- Richard Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed*

3. We must **trust** in the steadfast love of the Lord (vv. 3-4)

Quotes:

“There is no more delightful history for you to read in all the world than the history of your own lives, if you would just sit down and record for yourselves from the beginning until now, what God has been to you and done for you; what remarkable displays and outpourings of his mercy, faithfulness, and love there have been in all the situations you have gone through. If your hearts do not melt before you have gone halfway through that history, they are truly hard hearts. My father, the guide of my youth.”

- John Flavel, *The Mystery of Providence*

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Statistics:

- One study has shown that songs of lament make up less than 20% of Presbyterian and Baptist hymnals.
- A 2016-2017 study of CCLI, the commonly used contemporary Christian license, found that the number of lament oriented songs was well below 5%.
- My study of CCLI's top 100 songs of 2026 and found that only about 3% matched the full pattern of biblical lament, about 10% including parts of the process of lament, 23% broadly addressed human suffering, and 77% address praise and adoration.
- In comparison, one-third of the book of Psalms is filled with laments.

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Quotes:

“A diet of unremittingly jolly hymns inevitably creates an unrealistic horizon of expectation which sees the normative Christian life as one long triumphalist street party—a theologically incorrect and a pastorally disastrous scenario in a world of broken individuals. Has an unconscious belief that Christianity is—or at least should be—all about health, wealth, and happiness silently corrupted the content of our worship?”

- Carl Trueman, “What Do Miserable Christians Sing?”

3. We must **trust** in the steadfast love of the Lord (vv. 3-4)

Cross References:

“15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Hebrews 4:15-16

“25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.” **Hebrews 7:25**

“18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. 19 We love because he first loved us.” **1 John 4:18-19**

“28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” **Romans 8:28**

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