

For approximately nine years of David's life, he was hunted and hounded by King Saul and his allies. David had not done one thing to deserve this animosity and it often left him drained and depressed. **Psalm 13 has been called the “How Long” Psalm because four times in the first two verses that question is asked.**

However, by changing one letter, the real emphasis of the psalm is clearly seen. The psalm of “how long” becomes the psalm of “how- ling.” One commentator said Psalm 13 presents the “agony of desertion.”

When we carefully study the Bible, it is clear that our trials are time related and time is controlled by God. Sometimes that time of trouble will seem to last so long. Life will have its share of time related troubles and even the best of servants may begin to think that they have been forgotten and abandoned by God. But through a personal trust in God, the believer may go directly to the Lord and that sorrow can actually be turned into a song.

This specific psalm is about getting out of depression when you feel as if you are all alone and other people around you are causing the problem. There will be enemies and adversaries who will turn against us in life and when that happens, we may slip into the worst kind of depression. It is at this time when this psalm becomes so important. The point of the psalm is this:

WHEN THE BELIEVER IS DEPRESSED BECAUSE HE IS SURROUNDED BY ADVERSARIES AND TROUBLE, HE MAY GET A SONG BACK IN HIS HEART BY PRAYING TO GOD, TRUSTING IN GOD AND BY GOING TO WORSHIP GOD.

It does not matter how low we are, this psalm is the key to getting back up and to getting a song back into our heart. There are three main parts to this psalm:

PART #1 – The faithful believer is in a “how long” depression . **13:1-2**

Now the depression David was in was not sin-induced. David had not done something evil to bring this sin on him. There was nothing in his life that needed to be confessed. David was under great attack and his emotions were playing havoc with him, as emotions often do.

Four times in these two verses he cries out to God “how long.” What this tells us is that this trial had lasted for quite some time. In fact, **verse 1** indicates that it had apparently lasted long enough that David thought God had forgotten him and was actually hiding His face from him.

In **verse 2** it is clear that David could not sense God's presence or direction in any way. He thought he was on his own. He actually thought he needed to counsel himself. Every day was a depressing day and he had sorrow in his heart all day long.

David's enemies seemed to be on top of the world and seemed to have the upper hand. It was almost as if God had left David and blessed his enemies.

We do learn an important lesson here—when we are experiencing trials and they have gone on for some time, our emotions and minds can begin to play tricks on us, especially when it comes to our perspective of our relationship with God.

God cannot ever forget about His own. God cannot ever totally forsake His people. It is true that for awhile our enemies may appear to be getting the best of us, but that can only be for a short time. **We cannot ever allow what we feel to become the basis for what we believe.** Just because David felt something did not mean it was true.

I cannot help but think of Jesus Christ. While He was on that cross, it appeared as if every one of His enemies had won. It appeared as though they were winners and He was the loser. But nothing was further from the truth. His cross became their condemnation; His humiliation became their damnation and it became our salvation. God the Father did forsake God the Son for a moment, but in that one moment, His Son was accomplishing His greatest victory.

There may be moments in our life when it may appear as though we have been forsaken by God. That is not all bad. In fact, God may be using this to accomplish His greatest purposes with us. When we feel sad, as if we are all alone and totally abandoned and totally on our own, we need to faithfully wait on God and trust Him because He may be setting the stage for the greatest victory in our life.

PART #2 – The faithful believer makes his specific requests to God. **13:3-4**

We cannot read these psalms without time and time again realizing that troubles and trials drove David to his knees. Difficulties made David a man of prayer and that is exactly what they should do for us. There are three specific requests David makes to God and all three are imperatives in Hebrew:

Request #1 - The request for God to consider. **13:3a**

The first imperative request is for God to consider. That verb “consider” is one in Hebrew that means David is demanding that God “look” at and “behold” him and his specific situation (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 527).

Now grammatically in Hebrew, when we have an imperative given after an interrogative question sentence (i.e. “How Long?”), an expected consequence is in view (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, p. 325). In other words, **David expected God to look at him now as a result of the time length of the trial or trouble.** The “how long” became the basis for his imperative request for God to look at him or behold him. The actual idea of God looking and beholding is the idea of looking to give His favorable blessings.

David is not crying out to God just because something went wrong in his day. He is crying out to God because trouble has been with him for a long time and he is expecting God to intervene.

When it comes to us experiencing trouble, it is not that we need to get God's attention; it is that sometimes it takes God awhile to get our attention.

Sometimes it takes God awhile to get our attention. It takes God awhile to show us that we must depend on Him and not on ourselves. When we finally figure this out we will understand that it is not just that we should cry out to God, it is that we must cry out to God.

Request #2 - The request for God to answer . **13:3b**

David uses another imperative in asking God to answer his prayer. He is very emotional here and he does not only want God to look at him and his situation, but also answer him.

Have you ever done this? Have you ever cried out to God, please God, answer me? That is exactly what David was doing.

Now carefully observe that David addresses God as "O LORD, my God." Do you see that? David did not just believe in the majestic, Sovereign God, he knew God as his personal God. He knew God was watching him and listening to him.

Until we develop a relationship with the Lord that recognizes He is sovereign and personal, we will never go to God like this. He viewed God as "LORD" (Jehovah), the self-existing Sovereign "I am." But he also had such a personal relationship with God that he could call Him "my God." It was that concept of God that prompted him to pray.

Request #3 - The request for God to enlighten . **13:3c-4**

That Hebrew word "enlighten" means that David is asking God to give light and shining not only to his eyes, but to his mind and life. Things were very dark in David's life and he is asking God for some shining light (*Ibid.*, p. 23).

Now David gives three reasons why God needed to put some sunshine back into David's life:

(Reason #1) - Because if God doesn't, he will die . **13:3d**

Physically, emotionally and spiritually David was dying. He needed God's help and he needed it now. He was a living corpse. His life was zapped.

(Reason #2) - Because if God doesn't, his enemies will dominate . **13:4a**

David did not want his enemies to be able to testify how they had overcome him. God needed to come to David's rescue so his enemies would be silenced.

Reason #3) - Because if God doesn't, his adversaries will rejoice. **13:4b**

David was God's man. Those against David would like nothing more than to be able to rejoice over the fact that God's man had been toppled. This is exactly why David had cried out to God.

Now there is a progression to see in this psalm. **David has stopped counseling himself (v. 2) and has started crying out to God.**

The hymn we sing is correct, "Oh what peace we often forfeit, Oh what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry, everything to God in prayer."

PART #3 – The faithful believer finally rejoices. **13:5-6**

The formula found in these verses is better than any pill or drug you will ever take for depression. The counsel here is far greater than any pharmacist, psychologist or psychiatrist. **David had absolutely no one to depend on or help him except God and God was all he needed.**

There are four key actions in this psalm and if any person in depression follows this pattern, they will get out of their despair just like David did:

Action #1 - David prayed to God. **13:3-4**

We have already addressed this point. Prayer is a great lesson to learn when we are depressed. When we find ourselves depressed and in trouble, we need to get alone with God and pray. It is a key part of getting out of depression.

Action #2 - David trusted God. **13:5a**

David knew that the only one he could trust to get him out of trouble and depression was God. Notice he trusted in the "loving-kindness" or "mercy" of God. David started to think about the mercy of God and how He delights to help the helpless and that prompted him to start trusting God. He stopped trusting in himself and started trusting God.

Action #3 - David rejoiced in God. **13:5b**

Specifically he rejoiced in his salvation. He certainly could not rejoice in his circumstances, but he could rejoice in his salvation.

Action #4 - David worshipped God. **13:6**

One of the mistakes that troubled and depressed believers make is to stop going to church and stop worshipping God, but this is the key to getting out of depression. This is what can put a song back in your heart. This can get you out of a spiritual rut.

When the psalm opens, David is crying out to God and when it ends, he is singing praises to God.

Lessons:

1. We will go through dark times when God seems nowhere near, but He is near.
2. In dark times we need to go to God in prayer.
3. In dark times we need to trust God and His Word.
4. In dark times we need to rejoice in our salvation.
5. In dark times we need to continue to go to church to worship God.