

Discouraged with God

Key Verse

"Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart." Luke 18:1

Basic Biblical Understanding

How do you respond when God doesn't make sense to you? For example, you pray and God seems silent, or you beg God to intervene and He doesn't, or you ask God for one thing and He does the opposite...this can be discouraging. When you are discouraged in other areas, it's easy to bring our hurts to God. But when you're discouraged with God, what do you do then?

Take a moment to read Matthew 15:21–28. It's the story of the woman who asked Jesus to heal her demon possessed daughter. It's one of the most confusing stories in the New Testament. The woman pleads for Jesus' help, and He responds in ways that don't seem to make sense. He didn't respond at all in the beginning (v.23). Afterwards, He rejected her request because she was not Jewish (v.24). Finally, He insulted her by calling her a "dog" (v.26). His responses were discouraging, but she kept pursuing Him.

The story helps us see that even when God's responses don't make sense to us, our best option is to keep on pursuing Him. Regardless of the source of your discouragement, step one is always to look up to God. Instead of looking at the problem, or looking at what you don't have, or looking at your hurt—look up to God. What does that look like in the moment?

- **Pray:** Keep pouring out your heart to God. Even when you don't understand, tell Him. Even if you're upset, tell Him. Even if you don't know what to pray, tell Him that.
- **Praise:** Thank God for what He's done and who He is. Discouragement flourishes when we focus on what's wrong; joy comes when we praise God for what's right.
- **Pursue:** Keep on pursuing Him. Keep on reading and studying and worshipping and praying and seeking and knocking and submitting.
- **Position:** Place yourself where there are few distractions and you may better discern God's will, always remembering your true position before God as a follower of Christ.

When you look up to God, it doesn't mean God will always give you the answer you want. It doesn't mean God will save you from the results of poor decisions you made in your past. It doesn't mean God might not reveal that you've been a part of the problem. But when you look up to God in prayer, in praise, in pursuit, and in position—it puts you in the best possible place to gain perspective and receive direction.

Verses (ask God to show you how they apply to your life)

- "Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:17
- "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16

Helpful Questions and Application

1. Where are you looking in your discouragement? Are you looking towards people for advice, or towards things to distract, or towards circumstances to change? What's holding you back from looking up to God?
2. Discouragement with God is often linked to pride and/or selfishness. Pride says, "I'm upset with God because I know best what I need, what's right, and when things should happen." Selfishness says, "I'm upset with God because He didn't give me what I want." If you see any of those attitudes in your situation, take time to write them out and submit them to God in prayer. Consider asking a fellow believer to be your prayer partner. Ask God to give you the grace and patience to wait for Him.

Additional Resources

Scripture references: Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 6:18; Luke 6:12

WordTruth article: [Do You Really Believe What You Say about Prayer? God Always Answers Prayer but Not as We Think](#)