

Living with Lamenting & Longing

P S A L M S
O F
L A M E N T



Living with Lamenting & Longing

PSALMS OF LAMENT

THIS JOURNAL BELONGS TO

a devoted follower of Jesus

A WORD FROM PASTOR TODD

It's not natural to enjoy suffering. We all, as humans, want to be exempt from it.

Yet, ironically, no one is.

That's why endurance is such a key word for the Christian. All of us, at some point, will be called upon to embrace difficulties and trials. Some longer than others, or to a greater degree than others, but endurance will be necessary for every believer. Endurance that is vulnerably transparent, humbly honest, and longingly hopeful.

It is to this end that we turn to the Psalms, specifically the Psalms of Lament. These songs of the Hebrews, written in times of deep despair and distress, are human cries to God in the middle of suffering and struggle. Without a doubt each "complainer" is seeking God's deliverance, whether individually or collectively; but the apparent delay of divine action puts each lamenter into a vice grip of sorts, squeezing them to verbalize their frustration with what they are going through mixed with their faith in who they are mourning to.

In the end, confidence emerges, but it's not a shallow, blind confidence. It's a tested confidence; a refined-by-fire faith that knows what it means to truly hope with deep and often sorrowful longings, not simply wish with wide-eyed, fix-it-in-the-moment, genie-in-a-bottle fantasies.

On behalf of your elders, I invite you to explore these Psalms with us, relating not only to the human emotion expressed in each, but depending on the divine truth revealed in each. Let's identify with both the hurt and the hope, learning how to live with lamenting and longing as we wait for the soon return of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

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HOW TO USE THIS JOURNAL

Sermon Section

We hope that each week you will arrive to our Sunday morning services prepared to hear from God and to obey His Word. In preparation, please read over that week's text and pray that God would open your ears and heart to what He wants you to hear and do.

Sermon text with room for marking up The preacher's job is to help you see what the Word of God says. One of the best ways to do this is to show you the flow of the text as it is laid out in the Bible. Marking up the text is an effective way to see it more clearly. Each week, bring something to write with and follow along as we point out the main words and phrases in the text.

Notes Section Taking notes increases what you remember. During the sermon, please write down what you hear from the preacher or from the Holy Spirit. God uses the preaching of the Word of God, and we don't want what you hear to be forgotten. Take notes each week and then review your notes throughout the week. Also provided is a spot to write down the take-home truth for the week, as well as a spot to write down any immediate promptings from the Holy Spirit called "This week I will..."

Study Section

Our prayer is that you wouldn't let your time with Scripture be limited to hearing preaching on Sunday morning, but that personally and in community, you'd be engaging with Scripture every single day.

Discussion/reflection questions As we often say, we grow best in community, and Small Groups go best when each member is prepared to contribute to the conversation. So, each week we will give you several Small Group discussion questions that you can think through before you discuss them as a group. Please spend a few minutes looking through these questions before you attend your Small Group. This will make your discussion time so much more rich and profitable for everyone.

Weekly devotional written by an FFC member The insights from others can help us see a passage of Scripture in a new light. FFC has many talented writers in our church family. Each week we provide for you a short devotional that you can read during the week as you spend time with God. We hope that you will be encouraged and challenged by the insights of your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Recommended Scripture memorization verses The best way to meditate on the Word of God is by hiding it in our hearts. Spend a few minutes every day working on memorizing a verse or two of that week's text. Each week we will give you the main verse or phrase of that week's text. Read it several times every day and see how quickly you can memorize portions of Scripture.

BIBLE READING PLAN

Read through this Bible-in-a-year reading plan individually, with your family, or with your Small Group. Find and follow this plan on the YouVersion Bible app by scanning the QR code below or visiting firstfamily.church/bible-plan.



EXTRA POINT PODCAST

Tune in to the Extra Point Podcast for extra content and questions answered from Sunday sermons. New episodes each Tuesday! Listen and subscribe at firstfamily.church/podcasts.



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"LAMENT IS MORE THAN TEARS AND SORROW. It turns us to the Savior who promised to return. Lament vocalizes the longing for the day when "he will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Rev. 21:4). Christians believe in the goodness of God, and they know the arc of the plan of redemption: creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. In the meantime, as we long for the completion of that glorious plan, we lament.



A photograph of pink peonies in the foreground, slightly out of focus, with a misty, grey background. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing more detail than others. The overall mood is soft and contemplative.

That's why lament shouldn't be missing from our praying, singing, teaching, or counseling. We should allow it to bring grace to small group meetings, grief recovery groups, or pastoral prayers in the midst of a national crisis. Recovering the historic, biblical language of lament can be a ballast for the soul as we journey through a broken world."

MARK VROEGOP

WEEK 1

SERMON

Psalms of Lament Overview

THE PSALMS OF LAMENT

Communal

Psalm 12

Psalm 44

Psalm 58

Psalm 60

Psalm 74

Psalm 79

Psalm 80

Psalm 83

Psalm 85

Psalm 89

Psalm 90

Psalm 94

Psalm 123

Psalm 126

Psalm 129

Individual

Psalm 3

Psalm 4

Psalm 5

Psalm 7

Psalm 9

Psalm 10

Psalm 13

Psalm 14

Psalm 17

Psalm 22

Psalm 25

Psalm 26

Psalm 27

Psalm 28

Psalm 31

Psalm 36

Psalm 39

Psalm 41

Psalm 42

Psalm 43

Psalm 52

Psalm 53

Psalm 54

Psalm 55

Psalm 56

Psalm 57

Psalm 59

Psalm 61

Psalm 64

Psalm 70

Psalm 71

Psalm 77

Psalm 86

Psalm 89

Psalm 120

Psalm 139

Psalm 141

Psalm 142

Take-Home Truth _____

This week I will _____

WEEK 1

STUDY

Psalms of Lament Overview

1 What did you learn about the psalms that you didn't know previously?

2 What is a psalm of lament?

3 Is it sinful to lament? Why or why not?

4 How do we lament well in a way that is productive or helpful?

5 How can we use the psalms in private worship?

6 How can we use the psalms in corporate worship?

DEVOTIONAL

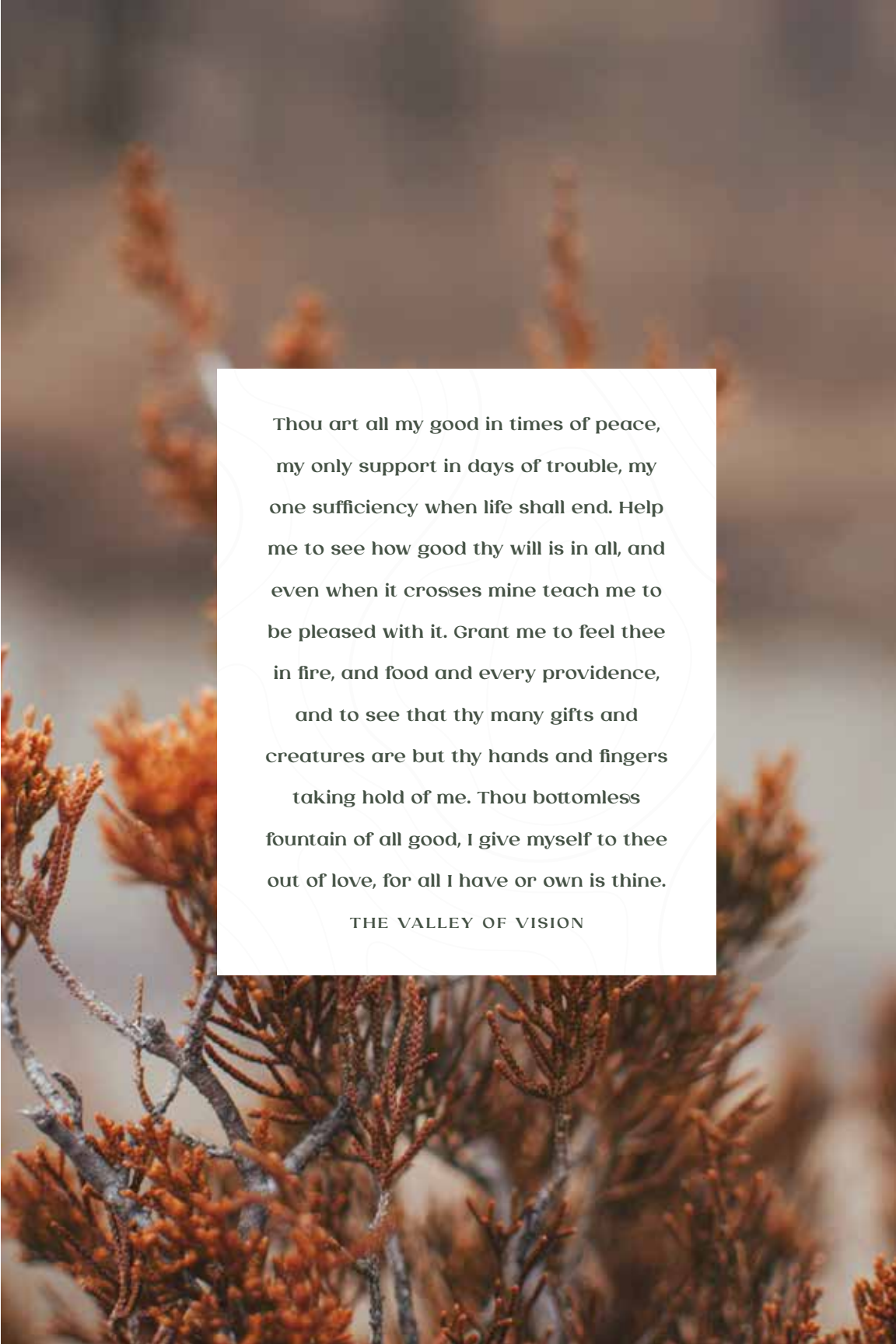
The book of Psalms was the hymnal, or the songbook, for God's people, the nation of Israel. In many ways, it still is. The Psalms are individual poems that would have, and still should be, used daily to help God's people communicate their hearts and feelings to God. One way to put it would be that the Psalms give us words to pray.

The Psalms are a gift to us! They are honest, emotional, raw, and intense. The 150 psalms that make up the book of Psalms cover all human experiences. They discuss life's best moments as well as worst moments. They include words of advice as well as words of warning. The book of Psalms includes all the emotions you experience in your lifetime. Many include rejoicing, while others involve disappointment, frustration, and fear.

As we dive into the psalms of lament in this series, I hope you are willing to be as vulnerable and transparent as the writers of the book of Psalms were and allow them to point you to your heavenly father as they were meant to be.

MEMORY VERSE

"The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom should I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life— whom should I dread?" Psalm 27:1



Thou art all my good in times of peace,
my only support in days of trouble, my
one sufficiency when life shall end. Help
me to see how good thy will is in all, and
even when it crosses mine teach me to
be pleased with it. Grant me to feel thee
in fire, and food and every providence,
and to see that thy many gifts and
creatures are but thy hands and fingers
taking hold of me. Thou bottomless
fountain of all good, I give myself to thee
out of love, for all I have or own is thine.

THE VALLEY OF VISION



WEEK 2

SERMON

Psalm 42

¹ As a deer longs for flowing streams, so I long for you, God.

² I thirst for God, the living God. When can I come and appear before God?

³ My tears have been my food day and night, while all day long people say to me, “Where is your God?”

⁴ I remember this as I pour out my heart: how I walked with many, leading the festive procession to the house of God, with joyful and thankful shouts.

⁵ Why, my soul, are you so dejected? Why are you in such turmoil? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God.

⁶ I am deeply depressed; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

⁷ Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your billows have swept over me.

⁸ The Lord will send his faithful love by day; his song will be with me in the night— a prayer to the God of my life.

⁹ I will say to God, my rock, “Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about in sorrow because of the enemy’s oppression?”

¹⁰ My adversaries taunt me, as if crushing my bones, while all day long they say to me, “Where is your God?”

¹¹ Why, my soul, are you so dejected? Why are you in such turmoil? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God.

Take-Home Truth _____

WEEK 2

STUDY

Psalm 42

1 Summarize this psalm as a group.

2 What do you tend to long for when you feel overwhelmed?

3 What is the psalmist's advice during trial?

4 What does it look like to hope in God?

5 What has God given us to help us remember His work and presence in our lives?

6 Are you hoping in God today, or are you overwhelmed by worry, fear, or sadness?

DEVOTIONAL

Several years ago, I found myself trudging through the woods at 5am headed toward a favorite turkey hunting site. The familiar path led me past a small pond. The closer I got to the pond, the stronger the stench of death became. I figured a cow was decomposing near the water and I would investigate after my hunt. With a turkey hanging over my shoulder, I made my way out of the woods past the pond where I found the source of the stench. Three deer were laying on the bank decomposing.

I called the farmer from my truck and told him what I found. He told me that “blue-tongue disease” was decimating the deer population in the area. Apparently, when the deer first get the disease, they seek out water. The thinking is that they try to wash the disease out of their system by drinking water. They know something isn’t right, so they seek out water as their only solution.

It reminded me of Psalm 42 where the writer penned, “As the deer pants for streams of water so my soul pants for you, my God.” Often missed in this passage is the connection between the results of sin and the desire for God. The song writer writes, “My tears have been my food day and night.” “My soul is downcast within me.” His solution is to put his hope in God.

There are at least two lessons from this passage. First, when life gets us down our first response should be to lean into our creator. Some lean into alcohol. Some seek medication. Some lean into a counselor. Some escape to pornography or a golf game. Some distance themselves. But like a deer and like the psalmist, the only solution through our problems toward life is to put our hope in our Creator, our Savior and God (vs. 11). The second lesson is more preventative in nature. Why do we wait until problems arise to lean into God? It seems that if we live our lives desiring God, just as a deer desires streams of water when they are sick, it would make those disastrous times less dramatic.

Heavenly Father, thank you for giving me hope in a world that is so filled with pain and heartache. Like the psalmist, there are times when I don't feel you close. At times, I feel so downcast and yet, I am determined to trust in you and in you alone because you are my creator and savior. You know me better than anyone else and I trust that you have my best interest at heart. Help me to lean into you and desire you more and more every day. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen!

MEMORY VERSE

“Why, my soul, are you so dejected? Why are you in such turmoil? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God.” Psalm 42:11

All things in me call for my rejection, All things
in thee plead my acceptance. I appeal from the
throne of perfect justice to thy throne of boundless
grace. Grant me to hear thy voice assuring me:
that by thy stripes I am healed, that thou wast
bruised for my iniquities, that thou hast been made
sin for me that I might be righteous in thee, that
my grievous sins, my manifold sins, are all forgiven,
buried in the ocean of thy concealing blood. I am
guilty, but pardoned, lost, but saved, wandering,
but found, sinning, but cleansed. Give me perpetual
broken-heartedness, Keep me always clinging to
thy cross, Flood me every moment with descending
grace, Open to me the springs of divine knowledge,
sparkling like crystal, flowing clear and unsullied
through my wilderness of life.

THE VALLEY OF VISION

WEEK 3

SERMON

Psalm 12

¹ Help, Lord, for no faithful one remains; the loyal have disappeared from the human race.

² They lie to one another; they speak with flattering lips and deceptive hearts.

³ May the Lord cut off all flattering lips and the tongue that speaks boastfully.

⁴ They say, “Through our tongues we have power; our lips are our own—who can be our master?”

⁵ “Because of the devastation of the needy and the groaning of the poor, I will now rise up,” says the Lord. “I will provide safety for the one who longs for it.”

⁶ The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in an earthen furnace, purified seven times.

⁷ You, Lord, will guard us; you will protect us from this generation forever.

⁸ The wicked prowl all around, and what is worthless is exalted by the human race.

Take-Home Truth _____

This week I will _____

WEEK 3

STUDY

Psalm 12

1 Summarize this psalm as a group.

2 Why is this psalm still so appropriate for today?

3 What are some common lies that are deceiving our culture?

4 Why is flattery so dangerous?

5 Do you tend to be more afraid of the wicked or of God?

6 Why is it important to accept God's Word as absolute truth?

DEVOTIONAL

Probably the hottest thing I have ever seen was a machine at the oil refinery in my hometown. Crude oil entering the refinery would first go through a distillation process in a furnace heated to 700-800 degrees Fahrenheit. While it happens in a different setting, the temperature for refining silver is even greater, well over 1,000 degrees. So when David says in Psalm 12:7 that God's words are like silver refined in a furnace, he isn't messing around.

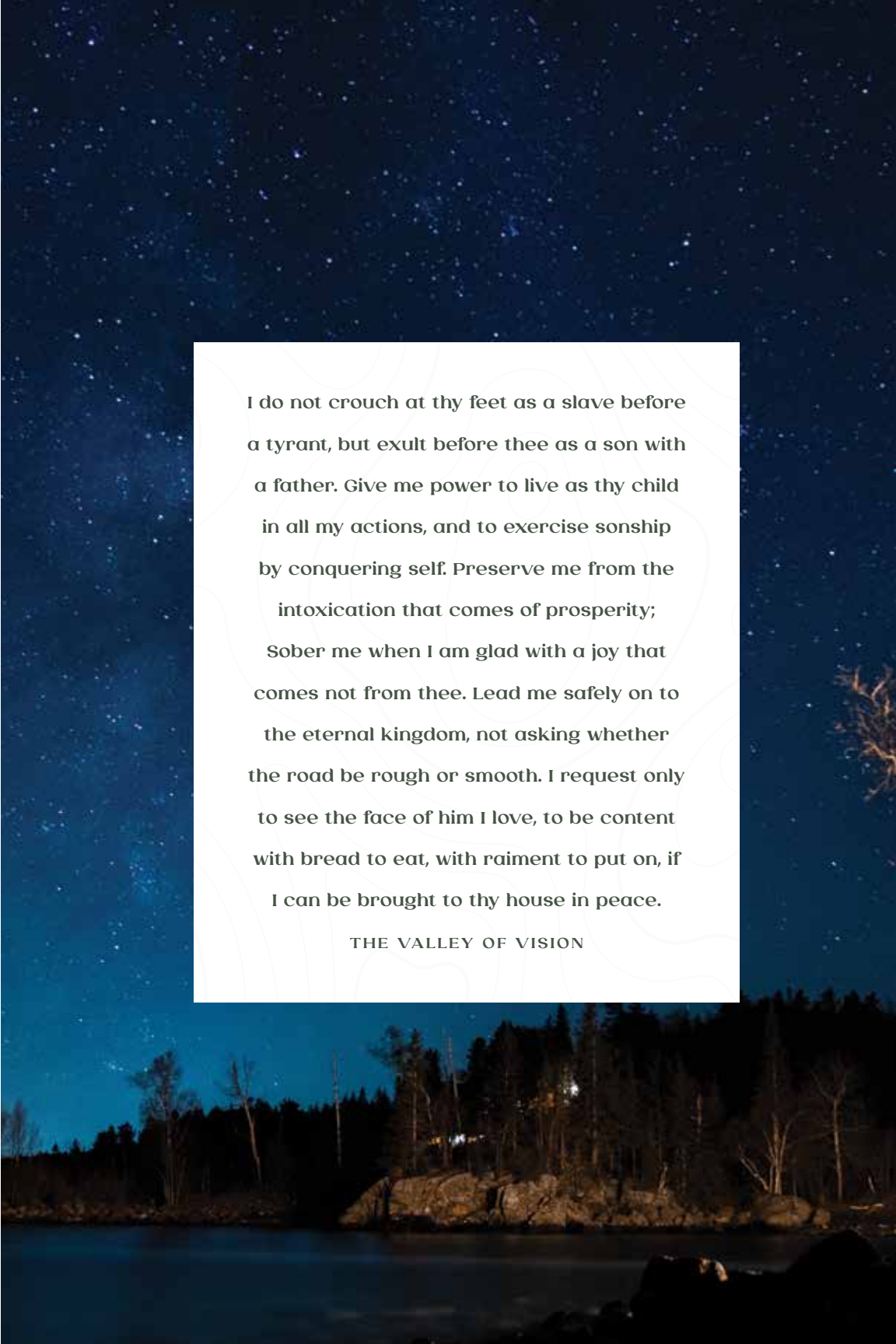
The cultural temperature at that time was elevated, an environment we can certainly relate to today. The eight verses of Psalm 12 alternate multiple times between condition and petition. The condition is bleak – lying, flattering, boasting, plundering, exalting vileness. David's desperation almost jumps off the page when he cries out in verse 1 that the faithful have vanished. In verses 1 and 3, he petitions God for salvation and the cutting off of the tongues that mock the truth.

One look at our current culture would find some similarities. Truth is twisted and mocked. Humans boast of our abilities to solve all of the world's problems. Salvation is sought in seemingly everything except God's words. We also find ourselves crying out for an answer. By God's grace, both we and David find it in verses 5 and 6. God doesn't just arise in the midst of the cultural heat; He arises because of it.

One of the verses in the song "Way Maker" says, "Even when I don't see it, you're working." When life gets its bleakest and our laments get their loudest, God's Word says that He is not only present but rising in His power and purity. The world's heat that appears meant for destruction is instead used for refinement. What "hot spots" can you lift up to God today and trust in His words and work?

MEMORY VERSE

"The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in an earthen furnace, purified seven times." Psalm 12:6

The background of the image is a night scene. The upper half is a deep blue sky filled with numerous stars and the faint, glowing arc of the Milky Way. The lower half shows a dark, silhouetted forest along a body of water. A rocky outcrop is visible in the middle ground, and some distant lights are visible through the trees. A white rectangular box with a faint, light-colored floral or leaf pattern is centered in the image, containing the text.

I do not crouch at thy feet as a slave before
a tyrant, but exult before thee as a son with
a father. Give me power to live as thy child
in all my actions, and to exercise sonship
by conquering self. Preserve me from the
intoxication that comes of prosperity;
Sober me when I am glad with a joy that
comes not from thee. Lead me safely on to
the eternal kingdom, not asking whether
the road be rough or smooth. I request only
to see the face of him I love, to be content
with bread to eat, with raiment to put on, if
I can be brought to thy house in peace.

THE VALLEY OF VISION



WEEK 4

SERMON

Psalm 3

¹ Lord, how my foes increase! There are many who attack me.

² Many say about me, “There is no help for him in God.” *Selah*

³ But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, and the one who lifts up my head.

⁴ I cry aloud to the Lord, and he answers me from his holy mountain. *Selah*

⁵ I lie down and sleep; I wake again because the Lord sustains me.

⁶ I will not be afraid of thousands of people who have taken their stand against me on every side.

⁷ Rise up, Lord! Save me, my God! You strike all my enemies on the cheek; you break the teeth of the wicked.

⁸ Salvation belongs to the Lord; may your blessing be on your people. *Selah*

Take-Home Truth _____

WEEK 4

STUDY

Psalm 3

1 Summarize this psalm as a group.

2 How can you currently relate to verses 1 & 2? Do you feel what David felt?

3 What does verse 3 teach us about God? Who is God to us?

4 What are you currently afraid of?

5 How was David able to not be frightened amid his terrible circumstances?

6 Are you trusting in God today as your salvation? Do you believe that His blessings are on you today?

DEVOTIONAL

If you are a parent, I think one of the biggest worries you'll have is the welfare, safety, and eternal state of your children. As you get older, your role and function will change/shift, but no matter how old they get, you won't stop being their parent.

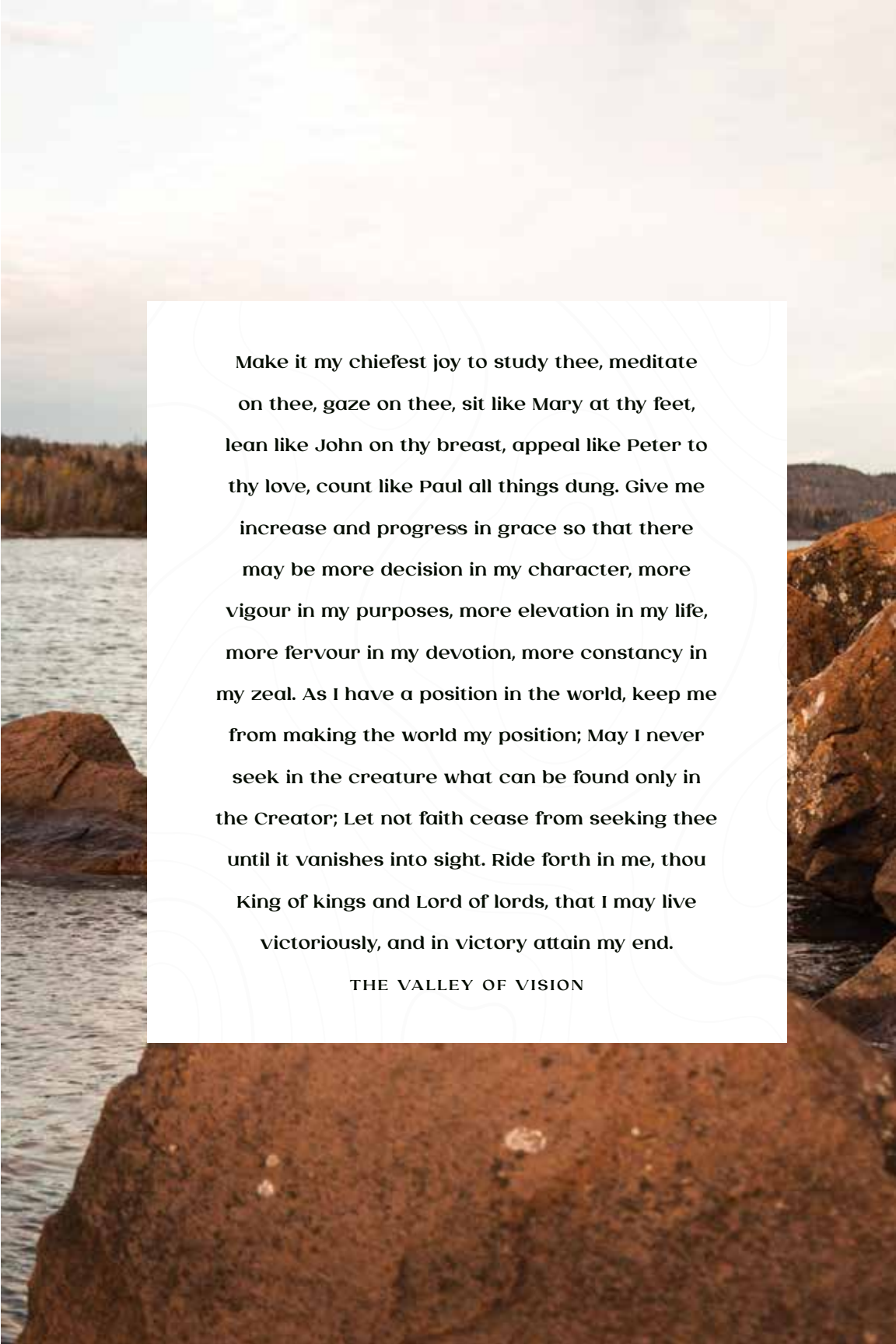
When something goes awry in that department, we can find ourselves grasping at anything and everything to fix it. And if not fixed quickly, hope turns to despair.

I can only imagine the sense of ultimate failure David must have felt when his own son raised up thousands of experienced men of war to kill him and take his throne. I don't know anyone that struggles with their relationship with their children to that level.

And yet, what was the first (and only) thing David turned to in his despair? He turned to God alone. We could follow this divine example. Why do we typically turn to other things as our source of hope before turning to God? David did not rely on any of his power, resources, or alliances, but the Lord as the only thing to rely on. David did the very thing Jesus commanded to do in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:33): "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Jesus said God knows what is bothering you, so seek Him and the promise in His Word is that you will be taken care of. David knew it, and Jesus promised it. We can hold on to that the same way David did when he went to sleep (v. 5). He rested peacefully while surrounded by his enemies because he knew the Lord would answer his cries and be his shield. Let's pray for the courage and faith to fully rely on our one true source of hope: Jesus!

MEMORY VERSE

"But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, and the one who lifts up my head."
Psalm 3:3



Make it my chiefest joy to study thee, meditate
on thee, gaze on thee, sit like Mary at thy feet,
lean like John on thy breast, appeal like Peter to
thy love, count like Paul all things dung. Give me
increase and progress in grace so that there
may be more decision in my character, more
vigour in my purposes, more elevation in my life,
more fervour in my devotion, more constancy in
my zeal. As I have a position in the world, keep me
from making the world my position; May I never
seek in the creature what can be found only in
the Creator; Let not faith cease from seeking thee
until it vanishes into sight. Ride forth in me, thou
King of kings and Lord of lords, that I may live
victoriously, and in victory attain my end.

THE VALLEY OF VISION



WEEK 5

SERMON

Psalm 126

¹ When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.

² Our mouths were filled with laughter then, and our tongues with shouts of joy.

Then they said among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for them.”

³ The Lord had done great things for us; we were joyful.

⁴ Restore our fortunes, Lord, like watercourses in the Negev.

⁵ Those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy.

⁶ Though one goes along weeping, carrying the bag of seed, he will surely come back with shouts of joy, carrying his sheaves.

Take-Home Truth _____

This week I will _____

WEEK 5

STUDY

Psalm 126

1 Summarize this psalm as a group.

2 Share a time in your past when God “restored” you.

3 Share a story of God’s goodness toward you that filled you with joy.

4 How does knowing what God has done in the past offer encouragement for the future?

5 What requests are you asking God to do for you or your family based on His character?

6 What promises are offered to us in verses 5-6? How do we apply these to our lives today?

DEVOTIONAL

Often times, our prayers can seem like more of a wish list or dreams without the meat of God's word or His will anywhere to be found. That's not to say that God is uninterested in our prayers, hurts, and emotions, but how important is God to our prayers? Even as we lament and pray for a revival for Christ's church and for our nation, is the purpose of our heart simply to have a more comfortable life with better morality among our leaders and communities? Cleaner entertainment and safer communities for our children?

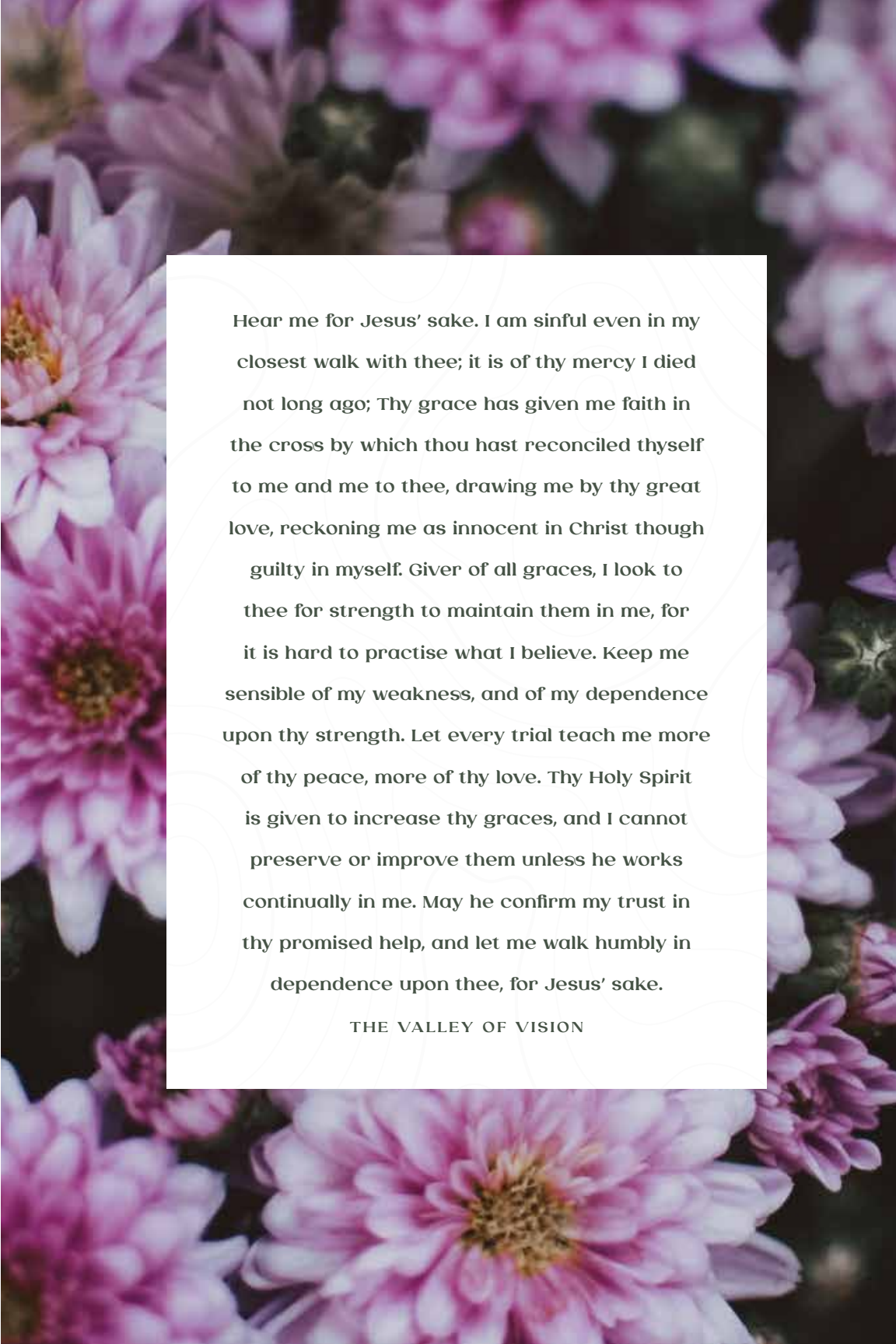
While the writer of Psalm 126 remembers stories of wonderful times of great comfort and joy for the nation of Israel and a desire to experience anew a time where "the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion," his lamentation includes true substance. He remembers the praise due the Lord for His great glory and restorative mercies.

In verses 2 and 3 the psalmist exclaims "they said among the nations 'the Lord has done great things for them [Israel].' The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad."

May God's glory and fame be the true substance of our prayers of lament and not only our own comfort. After all, restoration from God generally requires work from His people before they enjoy any worldly comforts. In the Old Testament, this could be rebuilding a city, rebuilding a temple, reclaiming a vineyard or tearing down idols. As we pray, let us be ready to tear down the idols in our own lives preparing to rebuild our relationships, faith, and service.

MEMORY VERSE

"The Lord had done great things for us; we were joyful." Psalm 126:3

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of several pink chrysanthemum flowers. The petals are numerous and layered, creating a dense, textured appearance. The colors range from light pink to a deeper magenta. The lighting is soft, highlighting the delicate structure of the flowers. A white rectangular box with a thin, faint border is centered on the page, containing the text.

Hear me for Jesus' sake. I am sinful even in my closest walk with thee; it is of thy mercy I died not long ago; Thy grace has given me faith in the cross by which thou hast reconciled thyself to me and me to thee, drawing me by thy great love, reckoning me as innocent in Christ though guilty in myself. Giver of all graces, I look to thee for strength to maintain them in me, for it is hard to practise what I believe. Keep me sensible of my weakness, and of my dependence upon thy strength. Let every trial teach me more of thy peace, more of thy love. Thy Holy Spirit is given to increase thy graces, and I cannot preserve or improve them unless he works continually in me. May he confirm my trust in thy promised help, and let me walk humbly in dependence upon thee, for Jesus' sake.

THE VALLEY OF VISION



WEEK 6

SERMON



Psalm 13

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

² How long will I store up anxious concerns within me, agony in my mind every day? How long will my enemy dominate me?

³ Consider me and answer, Lord my God. Restore brightness to my eyes; otherwise, I will sleep in death.

⁴ My enemy will say, “I have triumphed over him,” and my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.

⁵ But I have trusted in your faithful love; my heart will rejoice in your deliverance.

⁶ I will sing to the Lord because he has treated me generously.

Take-Home Truth _____

This week I will _____

WEEK 6

STUDY

Psalm 13

1 Summarize the psalm as a group.

2 Have you ever felt forgotten by God or alone?

3 Have you ever felt disappointed with God? Did you bring those disappointments and frustrations to God as David did? Why or why not?

4 What keeps us from sharing our fears, worries, and frustrations with God as David did?

5 Are you trusting in God's faithful love today? How are you rejoicing in your deliverance today?

6 Why is singing such a natural response to happiness and joy?

DEVOTIONAL

David is faced with a mighty foe, one who causes him to fear for his life and cry out to the Lord in distress. He asks the fourfold question, “How long, O Lord?” Many of us may feel these same questions burning within us as well. Whether it be the loss of a family member, financial difficulties, or personal sickness, there are likely those times when we have asked, “How long, O Lord” will this pain and sorrow last? “How long, O Lord” will I need to continue along this path of suffering and anxiety?

What do we do when these questions come across our minds and our faith seems ever so fragile? The answer is found in verse 3 when David says, “Consider and answer me, O Lord my God.” Our response to these feelings of helplessness and despair ought always to be prayer. When we experience fear, anxiety, and personal loss, we are to go to our Father with full assurance that He hears and will comfort us. It is through prayer that our pain is turned to joy and our despair to gladness.

The final two verses describe the overwhelming peace that David experienced in the midst of the trials he was enduring. It was through prayer that he was able to recognize and find joy in the unchanging love of God and the salvation that can be found in none other. We, too, can experience joy in the midst of trials by turning to God with a posture of prayer and unhesitating trust. Although the trials may still remain, they will never compare to the overwhelming and steadfast love of God.

MEMORY VERSE

“But I have trusted in your faithful love; my heart will rejoice in your deliverance.” Psalm 13:5



Uphold me by thy free Spirit, and may I not think it enough to be preserved from falling, but may I always go forward, always abounding in the work thou givest me to do. Strengthen me by thy Spirit in my inner self for every purpose of my Christian life. All my jewels I give to the shadow of the safety that is in thee— my name anew in Christ, my body, soul, talents, character, my success, wife, children, friends, work, my present, my future, my end. Take them, they are thine, and I am thine, now and for ever.

THE VALLEY OF VISION



WEEK 7

SERMON

Psalm 90

- ¹ Lord, you have been our refuge in every generation.
- ² Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity, you are God.
- ³ You return mankind to the dust, saying, “Return, descendants of Adam.”
- ⁴ For in your sight a thousand years are like yesterday that passes by, like a few hours of the night.
- ⁵ You end their lives; they sleep. They are like grass that grows in the morning—
- ⁶ in the morning it sprouts and grows; by evening it withers and dries up.
- ⁷ For we are consumed by your anger; we are terrified by your wrath.
- ⁸ You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.
- ⁹ For all our days ebb away under your wrath; we end our years like a sigh.
- ¹⁰ Our lives last seventy years or, if we are strong, eighty years. Even the best of them are struggle and sorrow; indeed, they pass quickly and we fly away.
- ¹¹ Who understands the power of your anger? Your wrath matches the fear that is due you.
- ¹² Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts.
- ¹³ Lord—how long? Turn and have compassion on your servants.
- ¹⁴ Satisfy us in the morning with your faithful love so that we may shout with joy and be glad all our days.
- ¹⁵ Make us rejoice for as many days as you have humbled us, for as many years as we have seen adversity.
- ¹⁶ Let your work be seen by your servants, and your splendor by their children.
- ¹⁷ Let the favor of the Lord our God be on us; establish for us the work of our hands— establish the work of our hands!

Take-Home Truth _____

WEEK 7

STUDY

Psalm 90

1 Summarize the psalm as a group.

2 What different images of God do you see throughout this psalm?

3 What are some differences between God and man this text teaches us?

4 What does this text teach us about humanity's time on earth?
What response do you have after learning this?

5 What do verses 7-11 teach us about some consequences of sinfulness?

6 What would it look like to rightly number your days? What are some of the results of doing this well?

DEVOTIONAL

There is a lot of studying involved with being a competent financial planner. It seems like I constantly have a book in my hand, preparing for the next thing. I was struggling in one course, so I fired off a question to my instructor, and he responded quickly with an answer that was way above my pay grade. But what intrigued me was the way he signed his email. Instead of using the standard “Sincerely,” he signed it “Memento Mori.” That’s Latin for “Remember, we all die.”

A little research showed that it was a phrase from the Middle Ages. Apparently, the accountants would prepare their books and before presenting them to the powers that be, they would write the words, “Memento Mori,” or “Remember, we all die.” It was their version of what the psalmist wrote in Psalm 90, “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” (vs. 12).

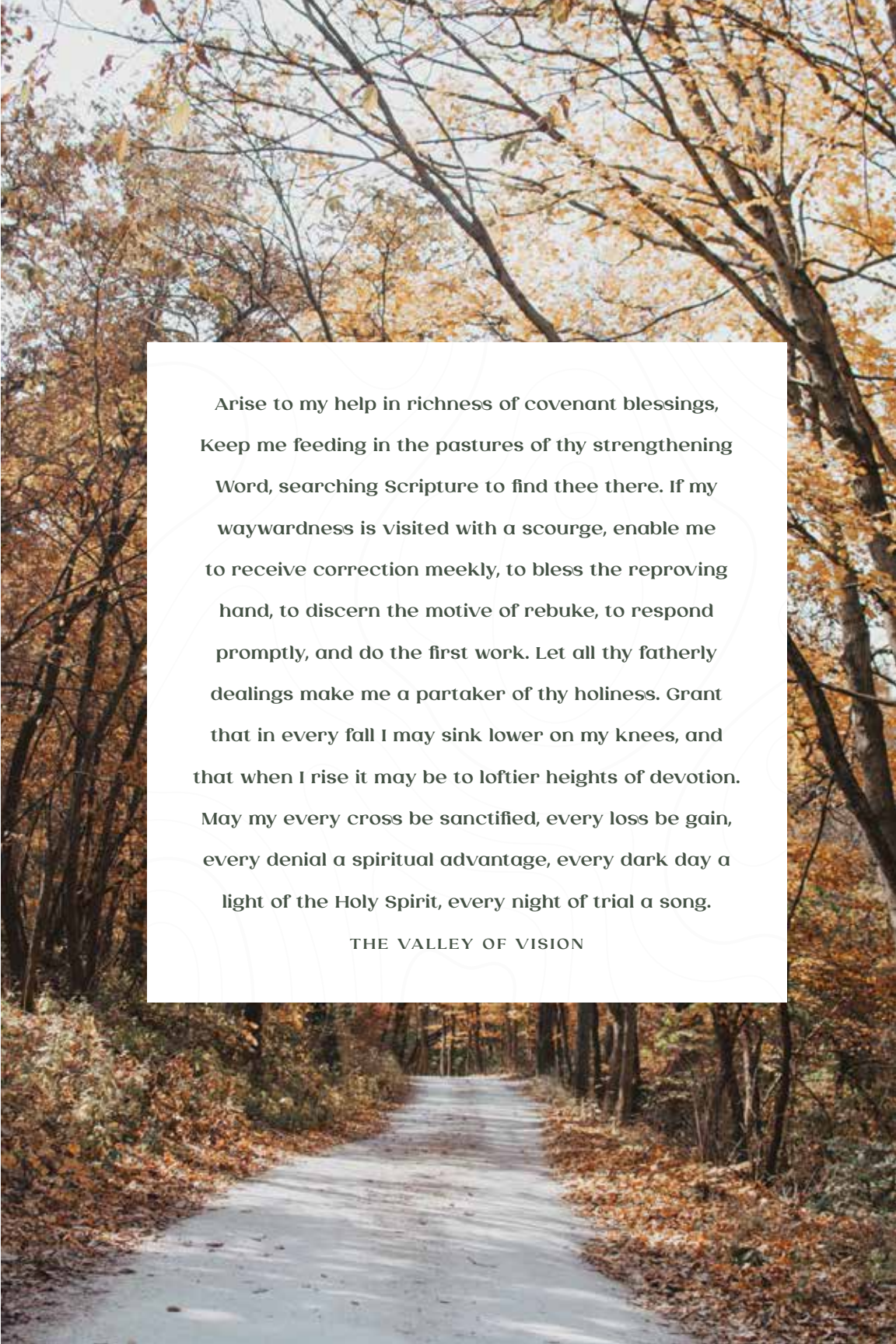
Psalm 90 is an interesting song that speaks of the pains and sorrows of life and the source of that pain, which is our own iniquities. Those iniquities inflame God’s righteous anger so that we “finish our years with a moan.” And verse 10 observes, “Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow.”

It’s in this context the song writer begs God to “Teach us to number our days, so that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” But what does that mean? The song writer is encouraging us with a couple of things. First, realize that there is a wisdom about this life to be acquired. If wisdom means “applied knowledge,” then we must set our heart toward the knowledge of God and his universe. That we are sinners and there is a penalty for our selfishness. Just as important is the application of that knowledge. Remember that wisdom requires knowledge and application. To know how to do something and not act on it is foolishness. Second, the song writer is encouraging us to realize that we will not live forever—“Memento Mori.” It’s as if the wisdom begins by understanding and embracing that our days are numbered. Then, living in light of it.

Heavenly Father, I thank you for the life you have given me. Help me to maximize every day for your honor and glory. I desire the knowledge of who you are and how you engage me. I desire to put into practice that knowledge and to walk worthy of being called your son (or daughter). In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

MEMORY VERSE

“Satisfy us in the morning with your faithful love so that we may shout with joy and be glad all our days.” Psalm 90:14



Arise to my help in richness of covenant blessings,
Keep me feeding in the pastures of thy strengthening
Word, searching Scripture to find thee there. If my
waywardness is visited with a scourge, enable me
to receive correction meekly, to bless the reproving
hand, to discern the motive of rebuke, to respond
promptly, and do the first work. Let all thy fatherly
dealings make me a partaker of thy holiness. Grant
that in every fall I may sink lower on my knees, and
that when I rise it may be to loftier heights of devotion.
May my every cross be sanctified, every loss be gain,
every denial a spiritual advantage, every dark day a
light of the Holy Spirit, every night of trial a song.

THE VALLEY OF VISION

WEEK 8

SERMON

Psalm 22

¹ My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Why are you so far from my deliverance and from my words of groaning? ² My God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, by night, yet I have no rest. ³ But you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. ⁴ Our ancestors trusted in you; they trusted, and you rescued them. ⁵ They cried to you and were set free; they trusted in you and were not disgraced. ⁶ But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by people. ⁷ Everyone who sees me mocks me; they sneer and shake their heads: ⁸ “He relies on the Lord; let him save him; let the Lord rescue him, since he takes pleasure in him.” ⁹ It was you who brought me out of the womb, making me secure at my mother’s breast. ¹⁰ I was given over to you at birth; you have been my God from my mother’s womb. ¹¹ Don’t be far from me, because distress is near and there’s no one to help. ¹² Many bulls surround me; strong ones of Bashan encircle me. ¹³ They open their mouths against me—lions, mauling and roaring. ¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are disjointed; my heart is like wax, melting within me. ¹⁵ My strength is dried up like baked clay; my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You put me into the dust of death. ¹⁶ For dogs have surrounded me; a gang of evildoers has closed in on me; they pierced my hands and my feet. ¹⁷ I can count all my bones; people look and stare at me. ¹⁸ They divided my garments among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing. ¹⁹ But you, Lord, don’t be far away. My strength, come quickly to help me. ²⁰ Rescue my life from the sword, my only life from the power of these dogs. ²¹ Save me from the lion’s mouth, from the horns of wild oxen. You answered me! ²² I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; I will praise you in the assembly. ²³ You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! All you descendants of Israel, revere him! ²⁴ For he has not despised or abhorred the torment of the oppressed. He did not hide his face from him but listened when he cried to him for help. ²⁵ I will give praise in the great assembly because of you; I will fulfill my vows before those who fear you. ²⁶ The humble will eat and be satisfied; those who seek the Lord will praise him. May your hearts live forever! ²⁷ All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord. All the families of the nations will bow down before you, ²⁸ for kingship belongs to the Lord; he rules the nations. ²⁹ All who prosper on earth will eat and bow down; all those who go down to the dust will kneel before him— even the one who cannot preserve his life. ³⁰ Their descendants will serve him; the next generation will be told about the Lord. ³¹ They will come and declare his righteousness; to a people yet to be born they will declare what he has done.

Take-Home Truth _____

WEEK 8

STUDY

Psalm 22

1 Summarize the psalm as a group.

2 What truths in the psalm encourage your heart? What facts challenge you?

3 Have you ever felt forsaken by God?

4 What does this text teach us about Christ's suffering from the cross?

5 Do you ever struggle to believe that God will never forsake us? Why is this so hard to believe?

6 What is hopeful news shared in verses 22-31? In light of this good news, how ought we live?

DEVOTIONAL

“Why have you abandoned me?”

Who hasn't felt this way at some point in their lives? In a large or small way, all of us have at one time or another felt that God was distant. Far. Not with us.

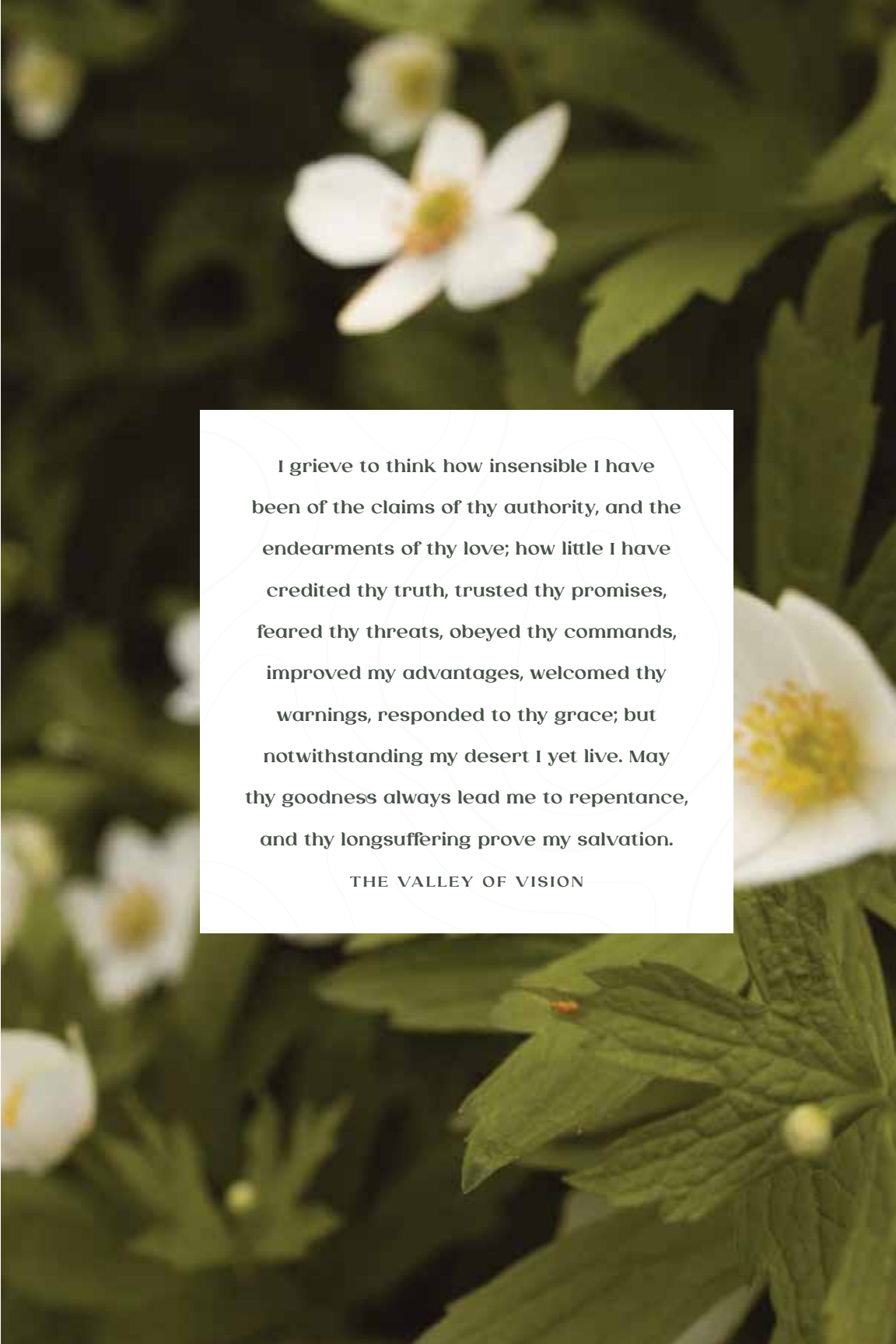
I felt this to varying degrees for about a seven-year stretch in my 20s. Like just about every Christian kid going off to college, I assumed I was going to meet my spouse at college or during the college years. That's what most people do, right? I thought that I would surely be married by 24. That age came and went, and as each year passed by, I began to slowly and increasingly question God. Why had He abandoned me? The desire for marriage was a good one, and God had seemingly deserted me in my singleness. While I can't say I ever mastered contentment and joy in my singleness, I can say that I found a sweet comfort to run to in times of my deepest heartache.

That comfort is found here in Psalm 22. Throughout this psalm, we see allusions to Jesus' crucifixion. “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” are the very words uttered by Christ on the cross. So why is there comfort to be found here? Because on the cross, Christ was abandoned. Christ endured the abandonment of the Father so that we would never have to. Christ not only bore our sin on the cross, but also separation from his Father. In Christ, we never have to see the back of God. In Christ, we will never be abandoned by God.

What comfort this is! In our deepest and darkest moments in life, we can rest in the fact that God will never abandon us, because Christ was abandoned on our behalf. So church, rest in that comfort today, tomorrow, and every day until Jesus returns.

MEMORY VERSE

“You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! All you descendants of Israel, revere him!” Psalm 22:23



I grieve to think how insensible I have been of the claims of thy authority, and the endearments of thy love; how little I have credited thy truth, trusted thy promises, feared thy threats, obeyed thy commands, improved my advantages, welcomed thy warnings, responded to thy grace; but notwithstanding my desert I yet live. May thy goodness always lead me to repentance, and thy longsuffering prove my salvation.

THE VALLEY OF VISION

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



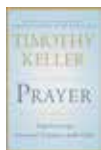
Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy

by Mark Vroegop



The Valley of Vision

by Arthur Bennett



Prayer

by Tim Keller



When Pain is Real and God Seems Silent

by Ligon Duncan



Be Still

by Matt Searles



Weep with Me

by Mark Vroegop

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