



GROWING AWARENESS

of God, self, and others in order to love with our whole heart

Many Psalms, like this one, give us a wonderful example of what it practically looks like to trust God with our lives and seek to love Him with our whole selves. The psalmists model aspects of what Jesus said was the most important commandment: to love God with our whole heart, mind, and soul (MATTHEW 11:35-38). They examined life circumstances. They processed emotions. They were honest with their doubts and struggles. In the end, this processing led them to whole-heartedly choose to turn toward God and be devoted to Him.

As you read through Psalm 42, you can utilize the questions on the following pages to help identify the psalmist's processing and the impact it had on his relationship with God. The purpose of these questions are two-fold:

1. Help you identify different awarenesses the psalmist came to as he processed what was happening.
2. Give you a guide and "permission," so to speak, to follow the model of the psalmist's processing and engagement with God.

Feel free to utilize the questions as a one-day study or to walk through and process the questions on different days. Share insights you glean with a family member or friend.

PSALM 42 (The Voice)

For the worship leader. A contemplative song of the sons of Korah.

- ¹ My soul is dry and thirsts for You, True God,
as a deer thirsts for water.
- ² I long for the True God who lives.
When can I stand before Him and feel His
comfort?
- ³ Right now I'm overwhelmed by my sorrow and
pain;
I can't stop feasting on my tears.
People crowd around me and say,
"Where is your True God whom you claim will
save?"
- ⁴ With a broken heart,
I remember times before
When I was with Your people. Those were better
days.
I used to lead them happily into the True God's
house,
Singing with joy, shouting thanksgivings with
abandon, joining the congregation in the
celebration.
- ⁵ Why am I so overwrought?
Why am I so disturbed?
Why can't I just hope in God?
Despite all my emotions, I will believe and praise
the One who saves me and is my life.
- ⁶ My God, my soul is so traumatized;
the only help is remembering You wherever I
may be;
From the land of the Jordan to Hermon's high
place to Mount Mizar.
- ⁷ In the roar of Your waterfalls,
ancient depths surge, calling out to the deep.
All Your waves break over me;
am I drowning?
- ⁸ Yet in the light of day, the Eternal shows me His
love.
When night settles in and all is dark, He keeps
me company —
His soothing song, a prayerful melody to the
True God of my life.
- ⁹ Even still, I will say to the True God, my rock
and strength:
"Why have You forgotten me?
Why must I live my life so depressed, crying
endlessly while my enemies have the upper
hand?"
- ¹⁰ My enemies taunt me.
They shatter my soul the way a sword shatters
a man's bones.
They keep taunting all the day long,
"Where is He, your True God?"
- ¹¹ Why am I so overwrought,
Why am I so disturbed?
Why can't I just hope in God?
Despite all my emotions, I will believe and
praise the One who saves me, my God.

The psalmist modeled how to stay connected to the love of God in the midst of external and internal turmoil. May we learn from him how to stay connected to the love of God, the one who is able to keep us safe from falling (JUDE 1:22-25), and grow our ability to love Him with our whole heart.

1. What words and phrases demonstrate the psalmist's perceptions of his life circumstances and relationships?
 - What are you currently experiencing in life and relationships?

2. How did the psalmist express his inner experience of what was happening? (What emotions did he name?)
 - What emotions are you experiencing in regard to current circumstances and relationships? What bodily sensations do you notice (1 THESSALONIANS 5:23)?

3. What was the psalmist saying to himself?
 - What are you saying to yourself?

4. What did the psalmist believe about God? What do you imagine God's posture to be toward the psalmist?
 - What are you believing about God? How do you sense God is posturing Himself toward you?

5. In the midst of it all, what was the psalmist willing himself to do?
 - What choices have you made? What are your options? What choices do you want to make moving forward?