

The Nourishing Vocation Project Near and Now:

*Listening to your Longings:
My soul thirsts for the living God*

Warm-up Question

When have you really needed God?



[West Virginia waterfalls in a National Geographic Contest!](#) by [ForestWander.com](#) is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

Reflection Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?



My Soul Thirsts for the Living God

Read [Psalm 42](#)

Bible Story Reflection

Where is God? We have probably all wondered this at certain times in our lives. Where is God when bad things happen? Where is God when things are hard to understand? Where is God when things do not make sense? Where is God when the days are long and the nights are hard? Where is God?

Psalm 42 and Psalm 43 are one poem that expresses the need of the human heart for God. Through poetic imagery that compares a longing for God to a thirst that can only be satiated by cool, running water, the psalmist lays bare a need that only God can fill. The psalmist names personal struggle, identifies personal sorrow, and expresses the taunts of others amid these trials. In all of this, the psalmist is surrounded by the presence of the absence of God. The psalmist longs for the presence of God to fill the void of this absence. In this lamentation, the hope of the psalmist is that God will hear the cries, and satisfy the longing, just as water quenches the thirst of a body that is parched, dry, and thirsty.

The open, honest, and vulnerable lamentations of the psalmist are an invitation for each of us to be equally open, honest, and vulnerable with God. The psalmist trusts that God will not only hear, but God will respond. In and through that response, the psalmist's need will be fulfilled and praise for God will again fill the psalmist's heart. This hope is possible because the psalmist trusts that God will indeed help in this time of trouble. The psalmist's words are an invitation for us to do the same.



Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do you identify with the psalmist?
2. Talk about a time when you asked, "Where are you, God?"
3. The psalmist uses the imagery of being thirsty and dry to describe a deep longing for God. What imagery would you use?
4. What is it like to be surrounded by the presence of the absence of God?
5. Amid challenging and sorrowful experiences, sometimes the words of others, even if they are well-intentioned, can be hurtful. What are some things that people say that make difficult times even harder?
6. The psalmist's lamentation is punctuated by the refrain, "hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God." What refrains sustain you in times of trouble?
7. Amid the sorrows of others, we are called to be the presence of God. What has this looked like for you?
8. What does it mean to you to say that God is your help and your God?

Activity Suggestions

Choose a refrain that has sustained you in times of difficulty. Write a psalm of lament, naming a personal struggle. Include the refrain throughout your psalm.

Visit someone who is struggling. Sit with them, and hold space for them in their difficulty.

Go for a walk, and look for reminders of God's presence in nature.

Prayer Concerns

Those who do not feel God's presence, those whose hearts are lamenting for any reason, caregivers

Closing Prayer

Meet me in my longings gracious God, and quench my thirsty soul. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

