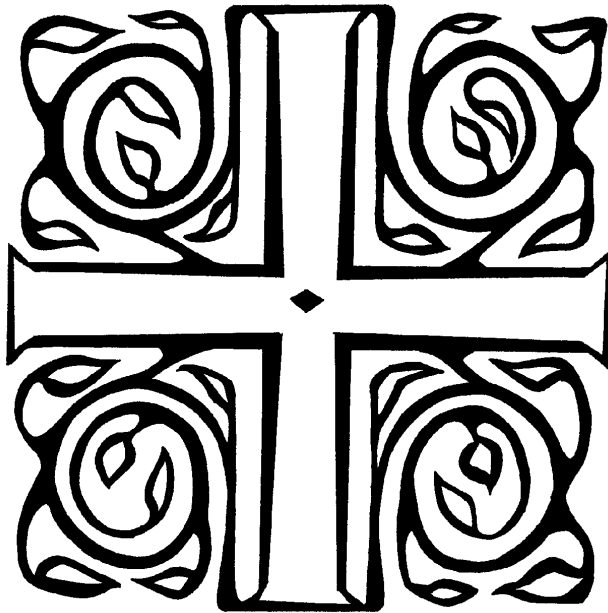


Closing Prayer

Holy God, you know everything about us. You know the inner most workings of our heart and still you never fail to show us love and patience. Thank you for this complicated human existence that you have given to us. Thank you for our emotions and the ways that they can guide us to better understand ourselves and You. Regardless of how we may feel, Mighty God, may our hearts always be filled with the knowledge of your presence, peace, and love.
AMEN.



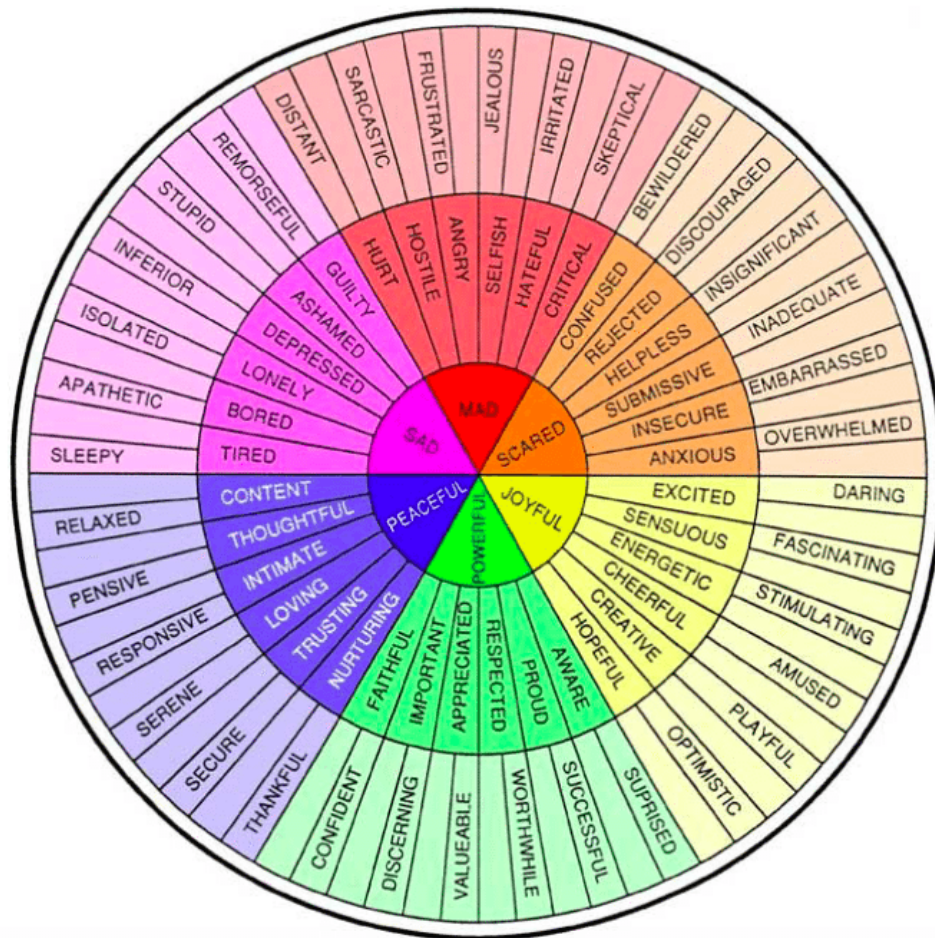
Sharing Our Emotions With God



*A Daily Devotional guided
by you and your emotions.*

The Feeling Wheel

The Feeling Wheel was developed in the 1980s as a way of helping individuals better articulate and understanding their emotions. The 6 core emotions at the center of the wheel branch out into broader, more subtle emotions.



Please Note: In this book I focus on the 6 core emotions depicted on this wheel, but I use slightly different names.
Instead of “Mad” we say “Anger”.
Instead of “Powerful” we say “Blessed”.

God’s Hope for the World is Shalom

God’s hope for the world is peace, but not just peace in the way we typically think of that word. The peace that God will bring to all the world is a deep peace. The Jewish word for this is “shalom”. God’s plan for all of creation is to bring a deep sense of peace to every corner of the universe that God has made. Shalom is where creation is headed - we are on a path towards a reality where God puts everything back together. A world where ever person is made whole in body, mind, and spirit; a world where things are no longer decaying and destroyed; a world where everything and everyone is at peace because everything and everyone is truly whole.

As you respond to this reflection would you like...

A song to reflect on, turn to page 36

A prayer to say, turn to page 15

An action to take, turn to page 40

Scripture for Times When We Feel Blessed:



To read a reflection on Expressing Gratitude for Our Blessings, turn to page 27.

To read a reflection titled Blessed to Be a Blessing , turn to page 11.

How to Use This Book

The journey of faith is one filled with ups and downs, good times and bad. The Lutheran Church often does a very good job of providing us with many different ways of thinking about God and about the struggles that we face in our life. However, we are not often encouraged to pay attention to our emotions and what they have to teach us. But that’s not because our emotions have nothing to do with our faith! In fact, the scriptures are filled with stories and prayers that encourage us to pay attention to our emotions and to share them with God.

This devotional book is not intended to be read cover to cover. Rather it has been designed in such a way so that your emotions can lead. Each day you are invited to open this book to page 5 and to check in with yourself. What are you feeling? (The feeling wheel on page 2 is a helpful tool for honing in on what specific emotion.) As you listen to your emotions, turn to the page that corresponds to what you are feeling today. Continue to follow the instructions at the bottom of each page, turning to the section of this book where you feel led. Eventually, you’ll arrive at the closing prayer page and that will conclude your time with the book for to-day.

I pray that intentionally engaging your emotions through this practice will allow you to connect with God and yourself in a new and unique way this Lent. May God be with you on the journey of faith.

Peace and Grace,
Pastor Nate

DISCLAIMER: This book will invite you to engage some difficult emotions and themes and will hopefully be helpful in encouraging you to share your emotions with God. However, please note that some emotions can be too much for a simple devotional book to handle. If that is the case, do not be afraid to ask for help. For more resources, you can connect with the National Alliance on Mental Illness at nami.org or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. You can also reach out to the pastoral staff here at Bethany for help connecting to local resources in the community. Above all know that you are a Beloved Child of God.



“The Christian religion asks us to put our trust not in ideas, and certainly not in ideologies, but in a God who was vulnerable enough to become human and die, and who desires to be present to us in our ordinary circumstances.”

- KATHLEEN NORRIS

A Song of Joy for Times of Joy

Below is a link to a beautiful rendition of a favorite hymn. Beethoven’s Ode to Joy is a beloved hymn that speaks to the deep joy that faith can create within us. Close your eyes as you listen to the music, or carefully reflect on some of the lyrics below. Allow your heart to overflow with Joy as you experience this famous hymn.



Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flow’rs
before Thee,
Op’ning to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and
sadness, drive the gloom of doubt
away.
Giver of immortal gladness, fill
us with the light of day.

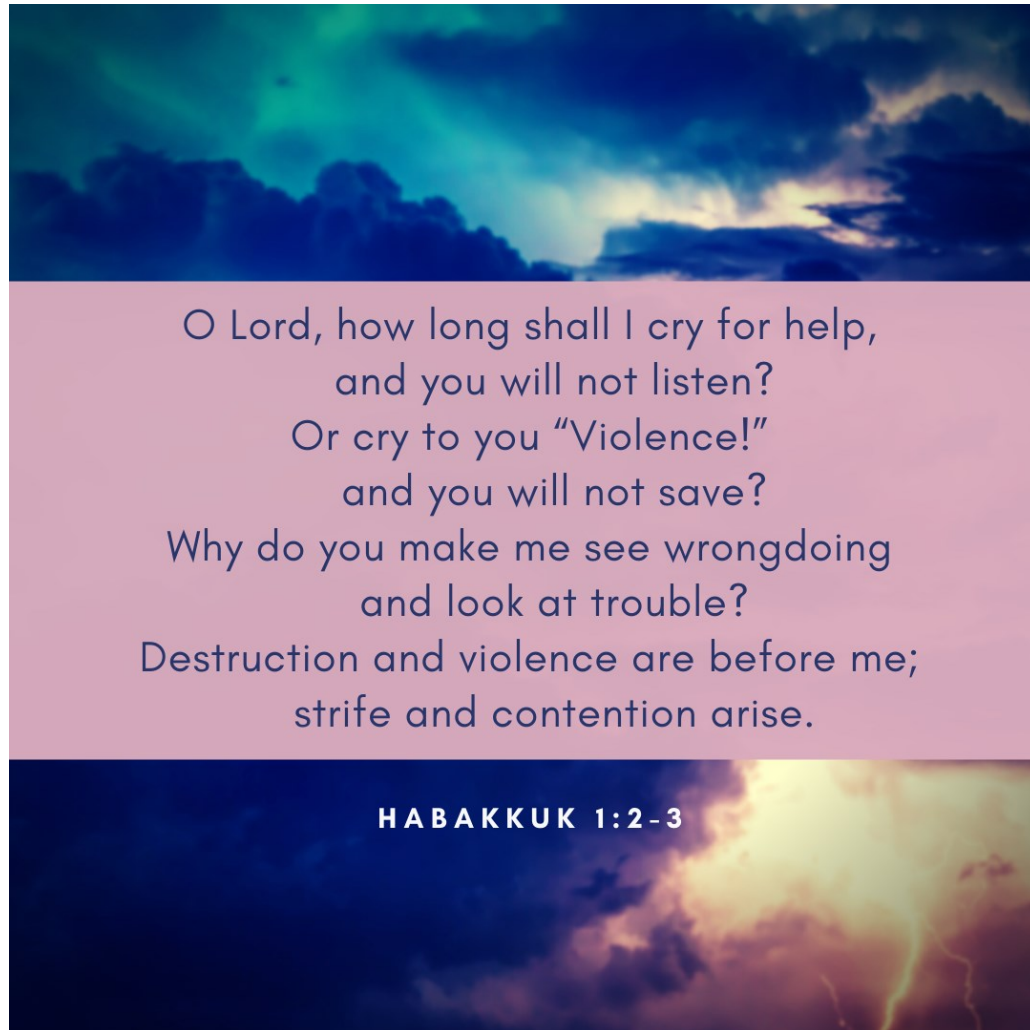
All Thy works with joy
surround Thee,
Earth and heav’n reflect Thy
rays,
Stars and angels sing around
Thee,
Center of unbroken praise.

Field and forest, vale and
mountain,
Flow’ry meadow, flashing sea,
Singing bird and flowing
fountain
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

Thou art giving and
forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of
living,
Ocean depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our
Brother, All who live in love are
Thine;
Teach us how to love each other,
Lift us to the joy divine.

Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

Scripture For Times When We Feel Anger:



To read a reflection on Expressing Our Anger to God, turn to page 18.

To read a reflection on Letting Go of Anger, turn to page 39.

Opening Prayer

Mighty God, Creator of all things;
Merciful Christ, Savior of the world;
Sustaining Spirit, our ever-present guide,

(you are invited to take a deep breath and make the sign of the cross)

In your gentle compassion, reveal to me now the depths of my human experience. Give me the wisdom to see my hopes, fears, and honest emotions so that I might share them with you.

Blessed Trinity, guide me on this journey of faith and open my heart, soul, and mind to the wisdom that you have authored into all aspects of my life.

*(Take an intentional moment to check in with how you are feeling.
Consult the Feeling Wheel on page 2 if needed.)*

If you are feeling sad today, turn to page 7 or 21

If you are feeling anger today, turn to page 12 or 44

If you are feeling blessed today, turn to page 16 or 46

If you are feeling joyful today, turn to page 8 or 33

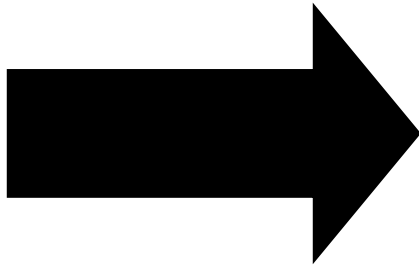
If you are feeling scared today, turn to page 22 or 26

If you are feeling peaceful today, turn to page 19 or 43

Action for Times of Anger

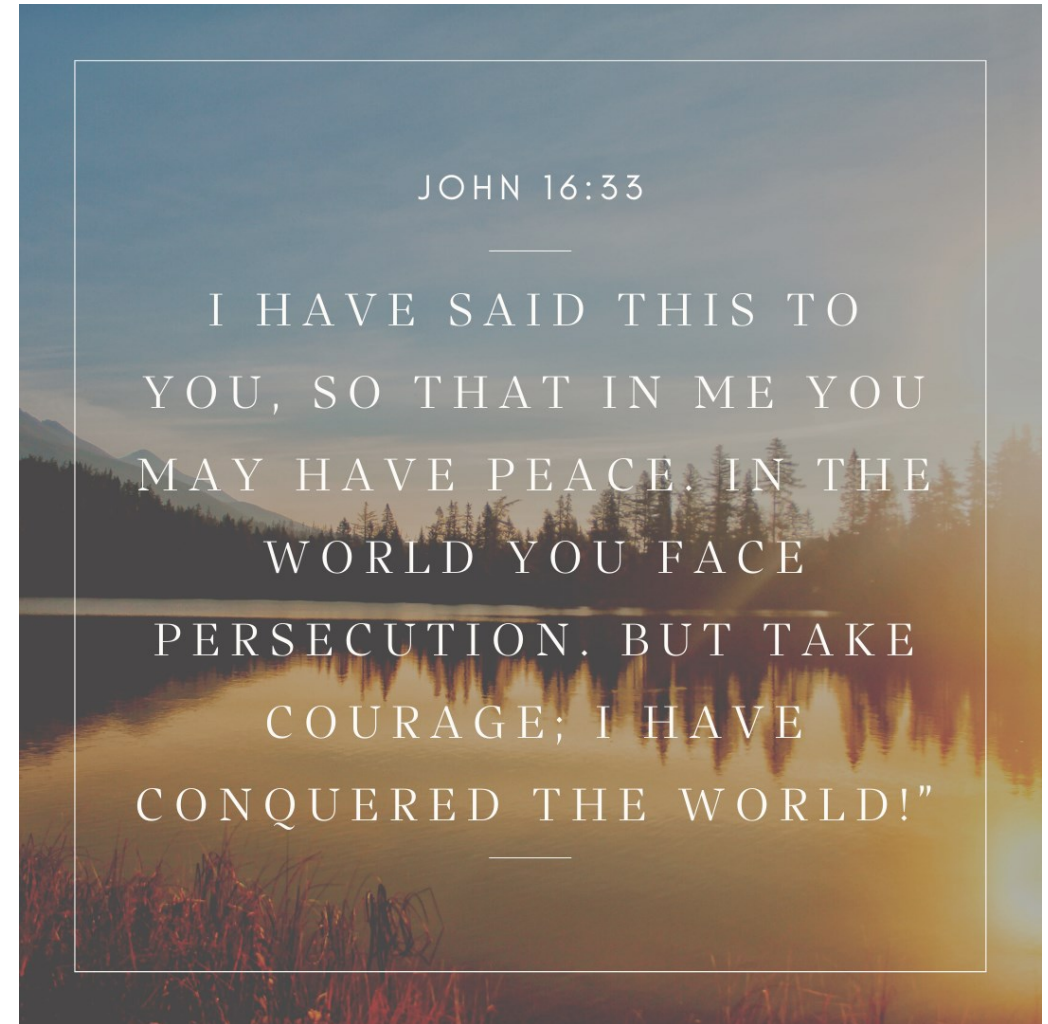
It can often be very helpful to provide a physical release for our anger. Go on a walk and while you move, talk honestly with God about your anger. You might even hold a rock as you walk and talk with God.

At the end of your walk you could drop the rock or throw it (safely!) into an open field or wooded area to help symbolize the release of your anger to God. Above all, know that you are not alone if you struggle to talk with God in times of anger.



Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

Scripture For Times When We Feel Peaceful:



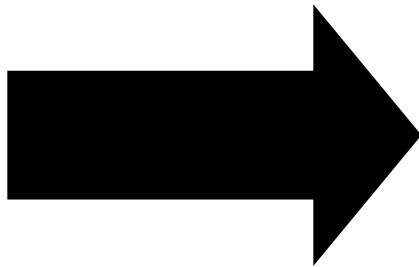
To read a reflection titled, “God’s Hope for the World is Shalom”, turn to page 47.

To read a reflection titled “Peace leads to Love”, turn to page 38.

Action for When We are Afraid

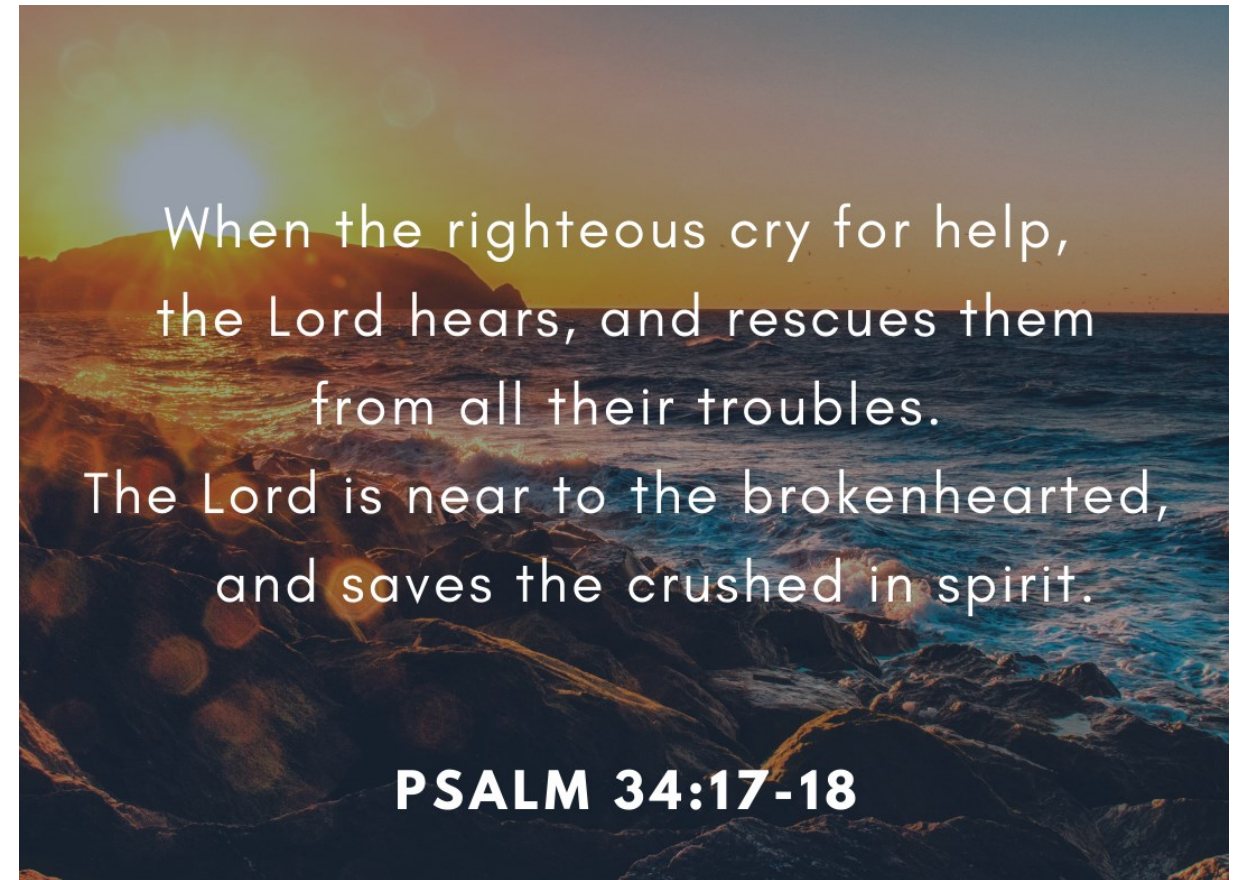
Fear is often the product of a mind that is raising or jumping to worst case scenarios. Through slow breathing and mindfulness one can ease some of the impact of fear by grounding in the present moment. This mindful breathing prayer will hopefully allow you to ground in the present moment and connect you with the God who is always with us in this present moment.

Sit comfortably in a chair with your feet on the floor and your back straight. Slow down your breathing and try to breathe fully, starting in your lower stomach and filling the entirety of the lungs, from bottom to top. Breathe out as slowly and fully as you can without straining. As you breathe in imagine that you are breathing in the comforting presence of the Holy Spirit. As you exhale, imagine the stress and fear exiting your body. Repeat this process for at least 5 cycles of breath.



Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

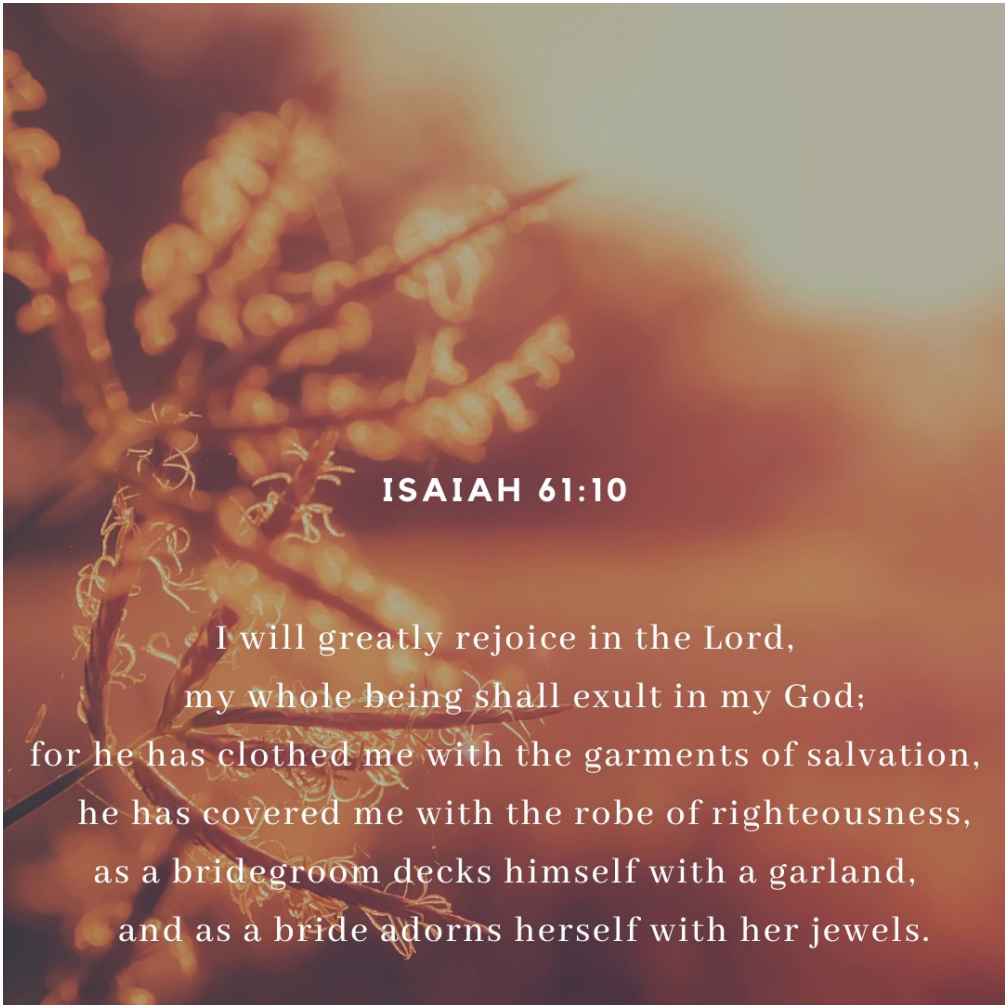
Scripture for Times When We Feel Sad:



To read a reflection on Lament during times of sadness turn to page 17.

To read a reflection on God's compassion towards us during our sadness, turn to page 32.

Scripture For Times When We Feel Joy:



To read a reflection on Praising God during times of Joy, turn to page 24.

To read a reflection titled “Our Joy Gives Way to Hope”, turn to page 35.

A Song of Praise for When Feeling Blessed

Chris Tomlin wrote a beautiful Praise and Worship song in the early 2000’s that speaks to the incredible and infinite ways of God. Follow the link below and listen to this song, or just mediate on some of the lyrics (also below). Allow yourself to be filled with awe and gratitude as you consider the indescribable nature of God.

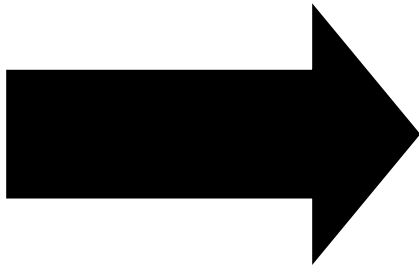


From the highest of heights to	All powerful, untamable
the depths of the sea	Awestruck, we fall to our
Creations revealing Your	knees
majesty	As we humbly proclaim
From the colors of fall to the	You are amazing, God
fragrance of spring	You are amazing, God
Every creature unique in the	Incomparable, unchangeable
song that it sings	You see the depths of my
All exclaiming	heart
Indescribable, uncontainable	And You love me the same
You placed the stars in the sky	You are amazing, God
And You know them by name	You are amazing, God
You are amazing, God	

Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

Action for When We Feel at Peace

When we are at peace we can often connect with God in new and vibrant ways. The mellow feelings of peacefulness can create new avenues for understanding God's presence in your life. Today take time to draw or paint a picture and think of this process as a form of prayer. Lean into your creative side and allow your peaceful feelings to lead you as you create an artistic offering to God.

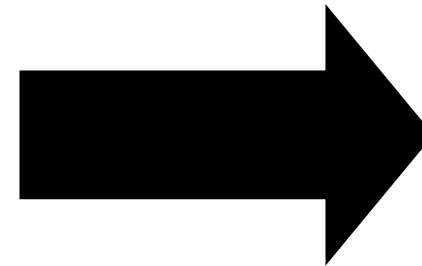


Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

Action for Times of Sadness

Sadness is an emotion we often like to avoid and/or one that we don't know how to deal with. Our religious tradition gives us a powerful tool for our sadness: lament. Many of the Psalms are songs of lament designed to provide those who are sad and suffering with a way of crying out to God and inviting God into our emotional reality. Psalm 13 provides a good outline of the 4 elements of a lament: Turn to God, articulate your complaint, boldly ask for help, trust that God will act.

Today, write a prayer of lament in a journal or piece of loose paper. Write out your honest feelings in 4 paragraphs, one for each of the 4 elements of the lament.



Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

The Comfort of God

Many titles and honorifics have been attributed to God, but at moments when we feel scared or fearful there is perhaps no greater comfort than imagining Jesus as our Good Shepherd. Christ is the one who, like a shepherd, walks beside us, and leads us away from danger. Christ is the one who, like a shepherd, stands between us and the wolves who would devour us. Christ is the one who, like a shepherd, guides us to the still waters, and the gentle fields where we can find peace once again. This image of Christ as our comfort and guide is articulated throughout the scriptures in a variety of ways; in fact the most common phrase in all of scripture is “Do Not Be Afraid”. Clearly, above all else, God wants us to know that when we are fearful, God is strong; when we are scared, God will be there to comfort us.

As you respond to this reflection would you like...

A song to reflect on, turn to page 14

A prayer to say, turn to page 37

An action to take, turn to page 42

Letting Go of Anger

It's ok to be angry, but holding onto our anger can have devastating social, emotional, and even physical effects. It's not always easy to understand what to do with our anger because it can well up inside us and, as Christians, the unique outlet of prayer really can create a space of release for our anger. God is powerful and eternal and God knows everything about us. We have the chance to share all of ourselves with God, at any moment of any day and just the simple act of honestly expressing our anger to God can be the release valve that we need.

As you respond to this reflection would you like...

A song to reflect on, turn to page 23

A prayer to say, turn to page 30

An action to take, turn to page 6

Peace Leads to Love

When we are at peace, we are often more capable of love. Our faith encourages us to trust in the promises that God has made to us. We are called to believe that Jesus really can forgive our sins and guide us to a more abundant life on earth and an eternal life after we pass. When we embrace this understanding of our present and future moments we can't help but be led to a deep love for God and all that God has done, as well as a love for those whom we encounter in this life. When the reality of God's presence in our life and world causes us to feel at peace with the current moment and at peace with whatever the future may hold, it inevitably frees us to act with love towards others. When we know everything is in God's hands, we can't help but respond with loving action.

As you respond to this reflection would you like...

A song to reflect on, turn to page 36

A prayer to say, turn to page 15

An action to take, turn to page 40

Blessed to be a Blessing

The life of faith asks so much of us. Jesus instructs us to love our neighbors as our self; God commands us to have no other Gods; the scriptures are filled with instructions about how followers of Christ are to treat others. But the Christian faith was never intended to be a life of following all the rules. The Christian faith is based on the story of God's incredible love for the world and Jesus' self-sacrifice for our sake. The Christian faith is about all that what God does for us first and then our experience of that incredible love and grace compels us to live in the ways that Jesus has revealed to us. The way that we often succinctly express this idea is by saying that we are blessed to be a blessing. God has given us so much and so in light of and in response to those blessings we look to be a blessing to those that God places upon our path.

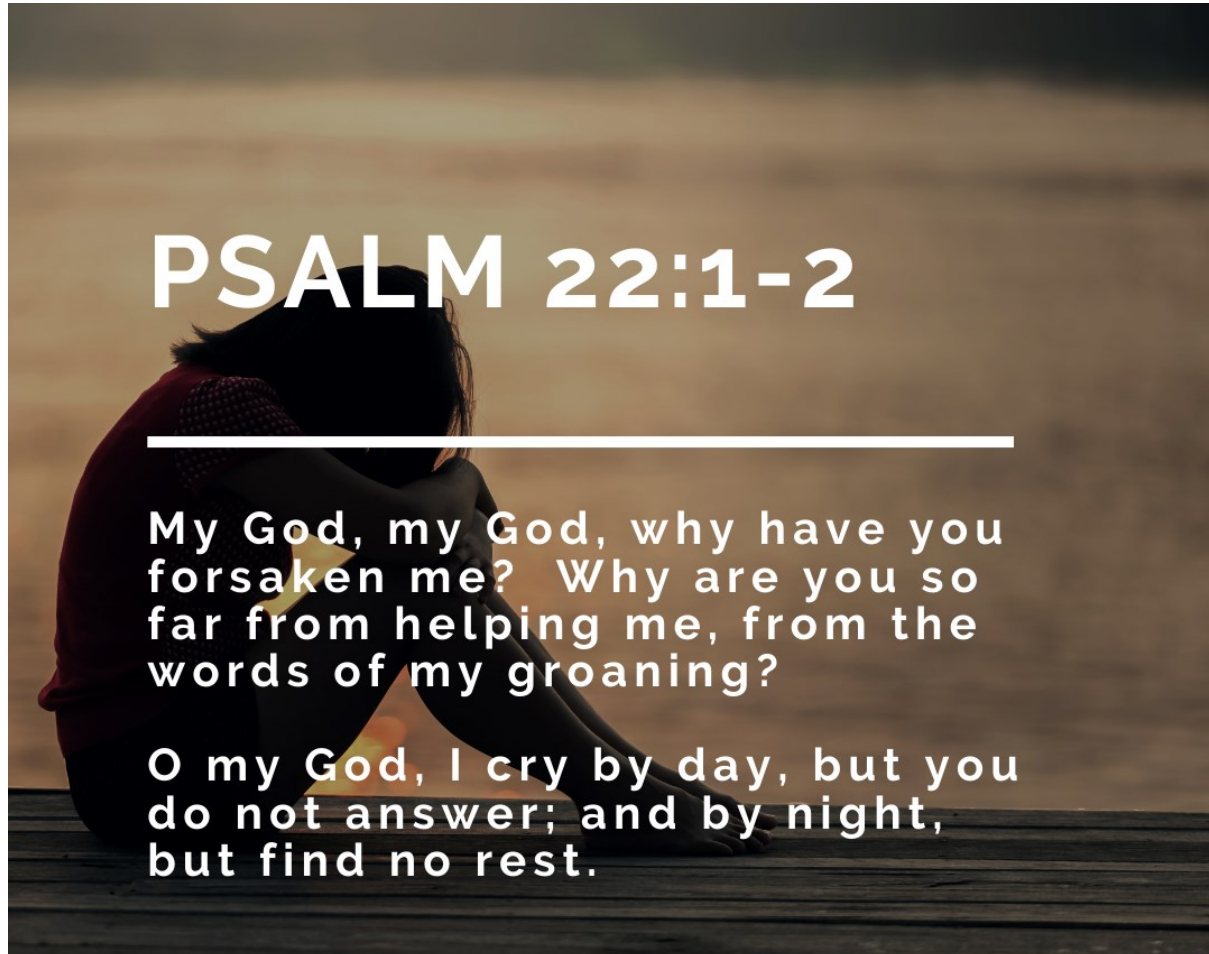
As you respond to this reflection would you like...

A song to reflect on, turn to page 41

A prayer to say, turn to page 21

An action to take, turn to page 31

Scripture For Times When We Feel Anger



PSALM 22:1-2

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.

To read a reflection on Expressing Our Anger to God, turn to page 18.

To read a reflection on Letting Go of Anger, turn to page 39.

A Prayer for Times of Fear



Compassionate God,
I'm scared, and yet I know that you told your people again and again, "Do Not Be Afraid." Still God, I'm scared and so I turn to you now and ask for comfort and compassion. Allow me to trust in you even when this sense of fear threatens to overwhelm me. Your Son promised a peace that would surpass all human understanding; send this peace to me now, O God. I am scared. I am weak. I am in need of a God and Savior to carry me through these trying times. I need your Holy Spirit to be with me now, O God. Send your Spirit, send your peace, send your love.
AMEN.

Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

A Song for When We Feel at Peace

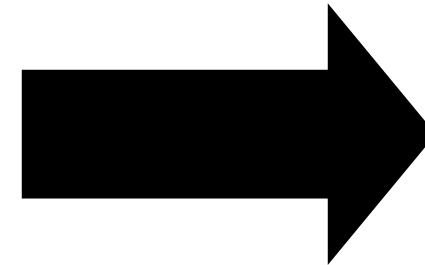
Here is a moving, peaceful song that slowly builds into an understanding of God's presence in our life. The lyrics are quite simple, "*Hallelujah, God is forever holding us together*". Sit back and quietly enjoy this music and give thanks for the ways that God is forever holding us all together and the ways that understanding this reality can fill us with gratitude and peace.



Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

Action for Times of Joy

Sit or walk outside and breath deeply. As you observe the world around you try to cultivate a sense of awe for what you see and experience. Give thanks to God for the air flowing through your lungs; cultivate a sense of joy as you look at the beauty of a tree or as you consider the patterns of the cracks in the sidewalk.



Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

A Song for Times of Fear

As people of faith, we have an incredible gift that can sustain us through even the scariest of circumstances. The abiding presence of God reminds us that the love, comfort, and hope of God is always with us.

Take time to listen to the hymn Abide With Me (linked below) or just read and meditate on some of the lyrics printed below. Allow the words of this beloved hymn to wash over you and bring comfort to whatever fear you may be feeling today.



Abide with me, fast falls the eventide
The darkness deepens Lord, with me abide
When other helpers fail and comforts flee
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me
Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away
Change and decay in all around I see
O Thou who changest not, abide with me
I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness
Where is death's sting?
Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

Our Joy Gives Way to Hope

Joy and hope often go hand in hand. When we encounter particularly good news, it can feel like the world is working in our faith; as if the future will indefinitely work out.

Obviously, this is not always the case, but when we find ourselves in a joyful place, the optimistic attitude that such emotions instill with us can be so beneficial in the moment. Taking time to hopefully look towards the future during a time of joy can allow you to envision possibilities that you might not be able to imagine during more difficult moments in your life. Not only that, but the promises of the Gospel and the joy that it can instill in our hearts should always encourage us to look towards the future with hope, because above all else, the Gospel proclaims to us that no matter what, in the end God will bring life from death.

As you respond to this reflection would you like...

A song to reflect on, turn to page 45

A prayer to say, turn to page 28

An action to take, turn to page 13

A Prayer for Times of Sadness

The below prayer is taken from the Evangelical Lutheran Worship service of Lament.



O God, where hearts are fearful and constricted,
grant courage and hope.

Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant
peace and reassurance.

Where impossibilities close every door and
window, grant imagination and resistance. Where
distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and
illumination.

Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant
soaring wings and strengthened dreams. All these
things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our
Savior. Amen.

Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

A Prayer for When We Feel at Peace

The following prayer is attributed to St. Francis of Assisi. As you sit with your peaceful emotions today, say these words and allow the peace you feel to flow through you so that others too might know the peace of Christ.



Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me bring love.

Where there is offence, let me bring pardon.

Where there is discord, let me bring union.

Where there is error, let me bring truth.

Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.

Where there is despair, let me bring hope.

Where there is darkness, let me bring your light.

Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.

O Master, let me not seek as much

to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand,

to be loved as to love,

for it is in giving that one receives,

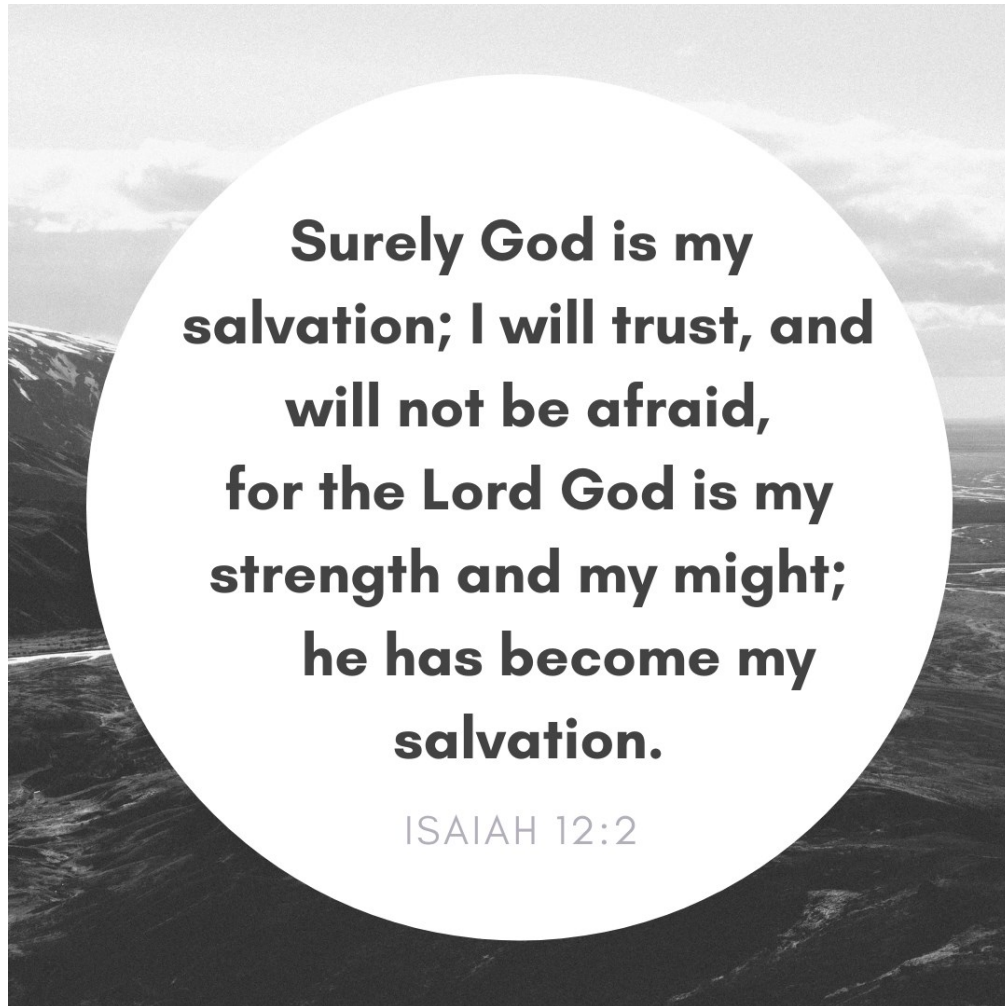
it is in self-forgetting that one finds,

it is in pardoning that one is pardoned,

it is in dying that one is raised to eternal life.

Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

Scripture For Times When We Feel Blessed:



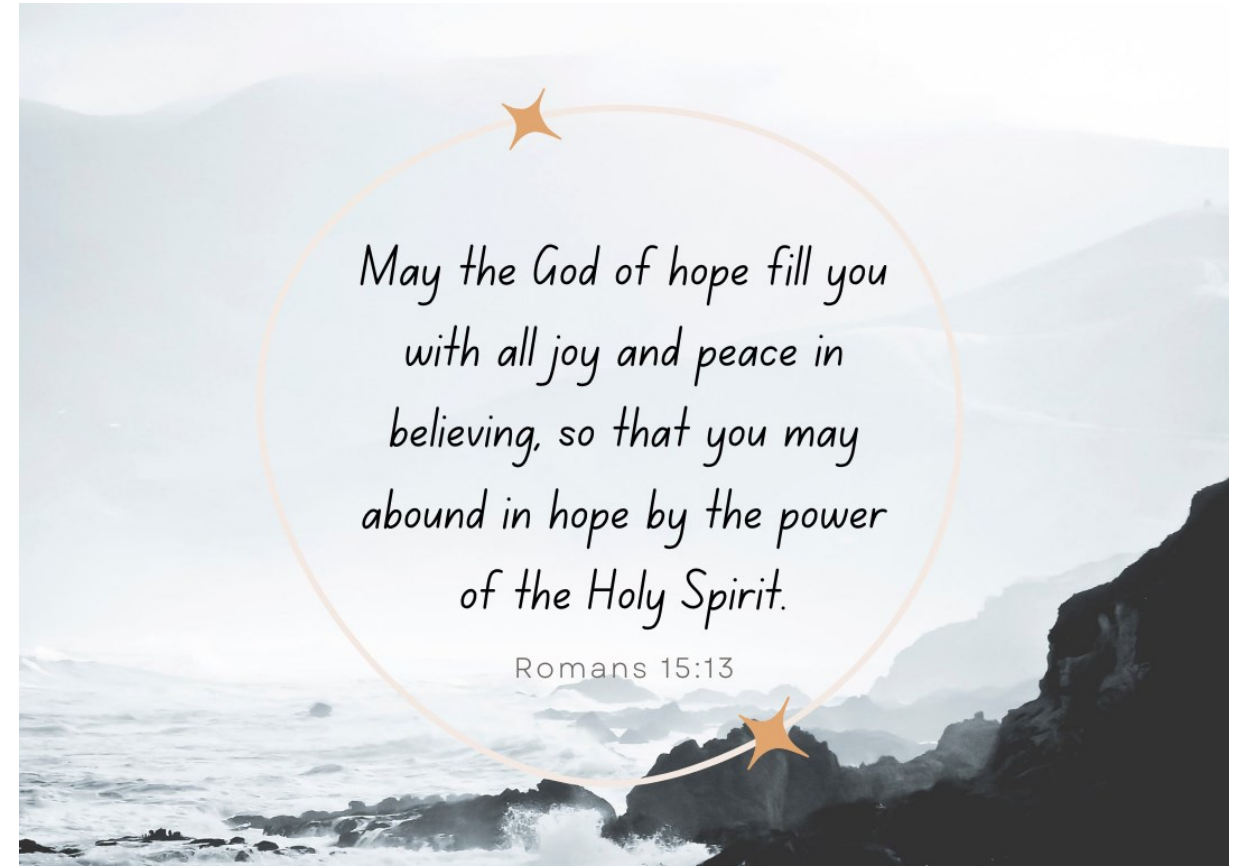
**Surely God is my
salvation; I will trust, and
will not be afraid,
for the Lord God is my
strength and my might;
he has become my
salvation.**

ISAIAH 12:2

To read a reflection on Expressing Gratitude for Our Blessings, turn to page 27.

To read a reflection titled Blessed to Be a Blessing, turn to page 11.

Scripture For Times When We Feel joyful:



*May the God of hope fill you
with all joy and peace in
believing, so that you may
abound in hope by the power
of the Holy Spirit.*

Romans 15:13

To read a reflection on Praising God during times of Joy, turn to page 24.

To read a reflection titled “Our Joy Gives Way to Hope”, turn to page 35.

God's Compassion to us During our Sadness

The word compassion literally means “to suffer with”. When we are faced with deep sadness, we often don’t want easy answers or clever ideas, we simply want someone to listen to our pain and to be with us during the difficult moments.

The truth is compassion is at the very heart of Jesus’ ministry and character. He was present with so many people in the midst of their pain. He really saw the sick and forgotten people around him and that presence with them was often the beginning of their healing.

In the same way, Jesus is present with us in our sadness.

He doesn’t offer clever phrases or quick fixes but his eternal presence is still here with us.

We put a lot of attention on how Jesus suffers for us. But the other truth is that Jesus suffers with us. We never have to face our sadness or sorrow alone.

As you respond to this reflection would you like...

A song to reflect on, turn to page 20

A prayer to say, turn to page 34

An action to take, turn to page 9

Lament as a Way of Processing Our Sadness

The sorrow and sadness of life can at times feel overwhelming. But our faith can give us real ways to process the grief we feel.

Often times when we encounter sorrow we want to ignore it or we try and distract ourselves from the uncomfortable feelings of sadness with happier thoughts. But the scriptures actually provide a third possibility: lament.

It’s not always healthy to avoid negative emotions and lament is a way of being honest about the sadness we feel and offering that to God. Through lament, we don’t deny our sadness, rather honestly invite God into our sorrow, to simply be present with us in our pain.

As you respond to this reflection would you like...

A song to reflect on, turn to page 20

A prayer to say, turn to page 34

An action to take, turn to page 9

Expressing Our Anger to God

It's ok to be angry. And it's more than ok to express that anger to God.

We are taught from an early age to approach God with reverence and respect and so it might seem wrong to yell at God, but it's actually very biblical. Many of the Psalms express intense anger towards God and when you think about it, that actually makes sense.

God loves us fully and completely. God wants to be a part of every aspect of our life; the good and the bad.

And so even our anger can be a practice of prayer.

As you respond to this reflection would you like...

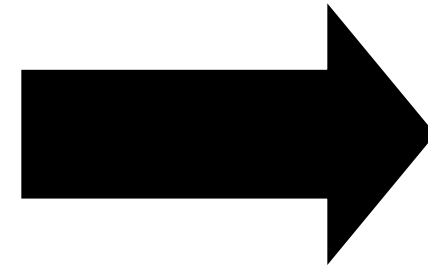
A song to reflect on, turn to page 23

A prayer to say, turn to page 30

An action to take, turn to page 6

Action for When We Feel Blessed

A powerful practice is to take a step back once in a while and create an image of the vastness of God's blessings in your life. You can do this today by taking a blank sheet of paper and then filling the page with words, phrases, and picture of blessings that God has placed in your life. Be creative! Don't just list the words, but create a dynamic picture that includes words and images. Try to list as much as you can and then keep this art project in a place where you will see it often, perhaps on your bathroom mirror, as a note in your phone, on your refrigerator. Each time you encounter the note, let it be reminder of the numerous ways that God has blessed your life.



Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

A Prayer for Times of Anger



God, I'm angry. You know my inner thoughts and so you know this anger that I am carrying around with me. I bring it to you because I want to be honest about the emotions in my heart. You know my emotions, sometimes before I can even put words to them and your Spirit intercedes on my behalf with sighs too deep for words; send me the presence of your Holy Spirit now, Mighty God. I am not ok at the moment and I need you to be my God right now.

I need you to be my rock and refuge; I need stable ground to stand on because I am angry and it feels as if the world is out of sync. AMEN.

Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

Scripture For Times When We Feel Peace:



To read a reflection titled, “God’s Hope for the World is Shalom”, turn to page 47.

To read a reflection titled “Peace leads to Love”, turn to page 38.

A Song for Times of Sadness

The hymn “In Deepest Night” articulates a profound understanding of the ways that God is still present with us in our deep sadness and sorrow. Listen to the recording (linked below) or just mediate on the lyrics and allow yourself to lament and pray using these words.

In deepest night, in darkest days,
when harps are hung, no songs we raise,
when silence must suffice as praise,
yet sounding in us quietly
there is the song of God.
When friend was lost, when love deceived,
dear Jesus wept, God was bereaved;
so with us in our grief God grieves,
and round about us mournfully
there are the tears of God.
When through the waters winds our path,
around us pain, around us death:
deep calls to deep, a saving breath,
and found beside us faithfully
there is the love of God.

–text copyright 1995 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin.
Augsburg Fortress



Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

The Promises of God

A lot has been written about all that God has done for God’s people. God created the heavens and the earth. God delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt to freedom and eventually the promised land. God sent prophets to redirect God’s Chosen People when they strayed from God’s plan. God sent Jesus to show us how we were intended to live and to serve as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. But lost in all this focus on everything that God has already done is the reality that God has also promised God’s people so much as well. We not only can look at the history of God for hope in hard times, but we can also look to the future hopefully because of what God has promised. God promises us forgiveness for those who repent, life beyond death, and the full restoration of all creation in the end. These are incredible promises that we can trust because God Almighty has made them to us. In times of fear and struggle we can still trust in the eternal promises of God our Creator and Redeemer.

As you respond to this reflection would you like...

A song to reflect on, turn to page 14

A prayer to say, turn to page 37

An action to take, turn to page 42

A Prayer for Times of Joy



Thank you Holy God, for all that you have given to me. Thank you Might Lord, for all the ways that you bless and protect me; you have been my help all the days of my life. My heart is filled with joy because of the works of the Lord. Thank you God for your forgiveness, for your grace, for your never-ending love. I worship and praise you God because of all that you have done for me. You have defeated death; you have promised new life; you have give to me an unending well of hope and so my joy overflows.

Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

A Prayer for When We Feel Blessed



Generous God, you are the giver of all good things. Despite life's ups and downs I still know that I am blessed. Thank you, Mighty God, for this life and all of it's indescribable gifts. May the blessings that you have given to us fill us not only with gratitude, but also a passion for sharing our blessings with others. Just as you have given so much to us, may we be compelled to respond to your grace by serving and caring for others.
AMEN.

Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

Scripture For Times When We Feel Scared:



To read a reflection on The Comfort of God, turn to page 10.

To read a reflection on The Promises of God, turn to page 29.

Expressing Gratitude for Our Blessings

Our world is the perfect distance from the Sun to allow for human life. But not only that, the rotation of the earth ensures that all of the planet is properly warmed and cooled each day. Additionally, there is just the right balance in the atmosphere for the air to be breathable; the soil has the correct nutrients to allow for food to grow; our bodies are a complex balance of ongoing chemical reactions that simply happen, every day, without any effort on our part. When you step back and look at all the details you begin to uncover this picture of a finely tuned symphony that God has created allowing for life to flourish. God has created everything just right and when you see all these beautiful pieces working together in concert it is nearly impossible to not feel deep gratitude for the ways that God lovingly created this world.

As you respond to this reflection would you like...

A song to reflect on, turn to page 41

A prayer to say, turn to page 21

An action to take, turn to page 31

Scripture For Times When We Feel Scared:



To read a reflection on The Comfort of God, turn to page 10.

To read a reflection on The Promises of God, turn to page 29.

A Song for Times of Anger

Sometimes we don't give ourselves the permission to share our anger with God, but the Psalms are filled with this exact type of honest conversation. Hunter Hayes is a singer song writer who recently put his honest angry emotions and questions to music in his song "Dear God".

Take a moment to listen to the music using the link below, or just read and meditate on the excerpt below that Hunter wrote as he expressed his frustrations with God.



*So I'm callin' in
Are you listenin'?
You made a man this fragile
You made a heart that can break
You showed me the road less traveled
Knowin' I'm gonna run away
You make me love so hard
When everything I love just leaves
Are you sure there's nothin' wrong with me?
And why does my life have to hurt so much?*

*Why can't I find any peace or love?
And why do I feel like I'm not enough?
Dear God, are you sure that you don't mess up?
Can you still call it prayin' if All that I do is sitting here cursin'
Cursin' your name again?
The truth is it's not even you
It's just me that I'm up against
But you made me this
Can we share the blame for this?*

Turn to page 48 to conclude your time of prayer.

Praising God During Times of Joy

Sunday morning Church services are perhaps one of the more peculiar gatherings in all of American society. The intention of these gatherings is specifically to “worship”; to express our gratitude and joy to a Divine being that is beyond our comprehension. And yet, billions of people participate in this activity every week. There is just something within our hearts that wants to connect with God in this strange way. Often times during life’s ups and downs the thought of worship and praise seems ridiculous. But when our hearts are filled with joy there is almost no more fulfilling activity. When we feel joyful, allowing that emotion to flow through us in acts of worship and praise connects us to God in profound and meaningful ways. Not only that, but our worship also connects us with the great history of our faith; with the people who have been singing praises to God every week for thousands of years.

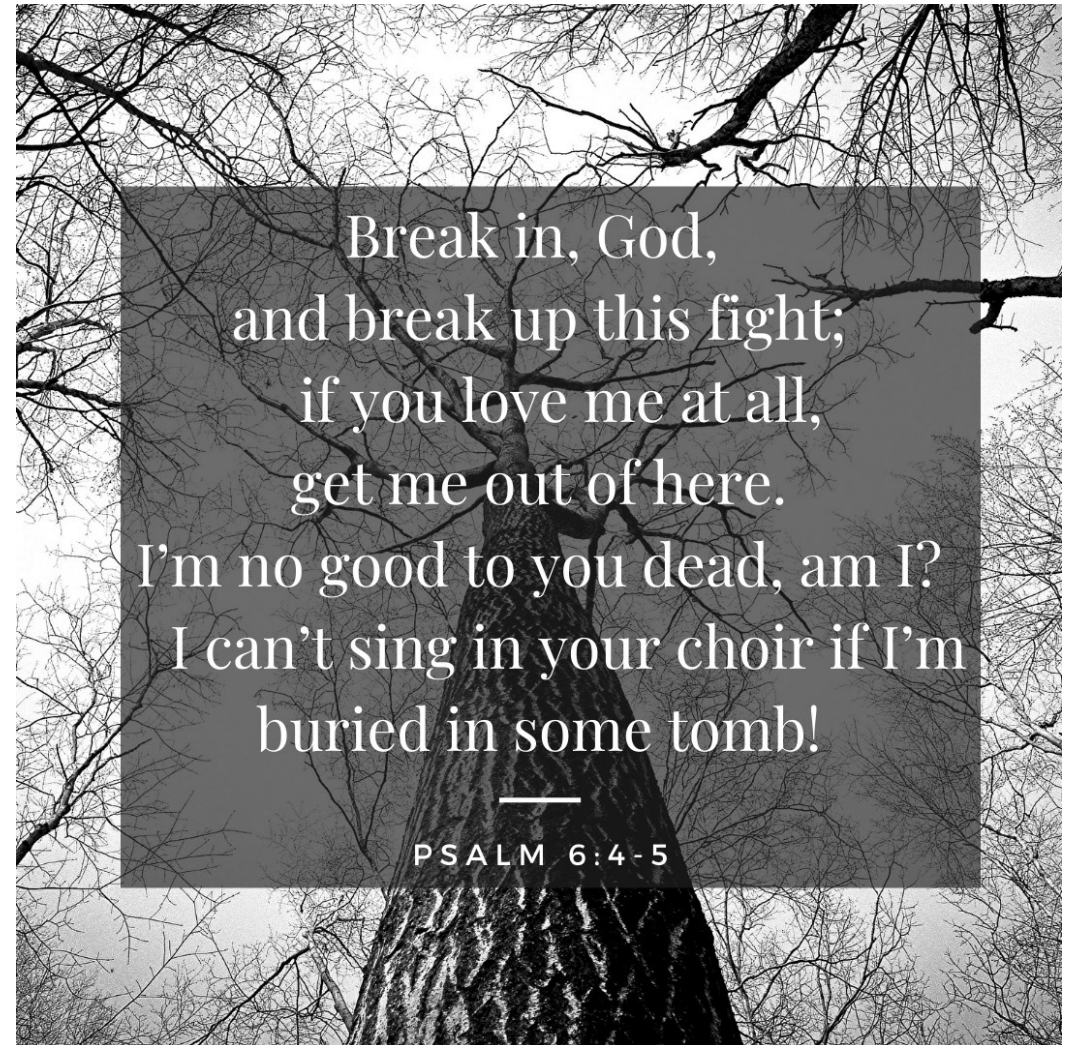
As you respond to this reflection would you like...

A song to reflect on, turn to page 45

A prayer to say, turn to page 28

An action to take, turn to page 13

Scripture For Times When We Feel Sad:



Break in, God,
and break up this fight;
if you love me at all,
get me out of here.
I'm no good to you dead, am I?
I can't sing in your choir if I'm
buried in some tomb!

—
PSALM 6:4-5

*To read a reflection on Lament during times of sadness
turn to page 17.*

*To read a reflection on God's compassion towards us
during our sadness, turn to page 32.*