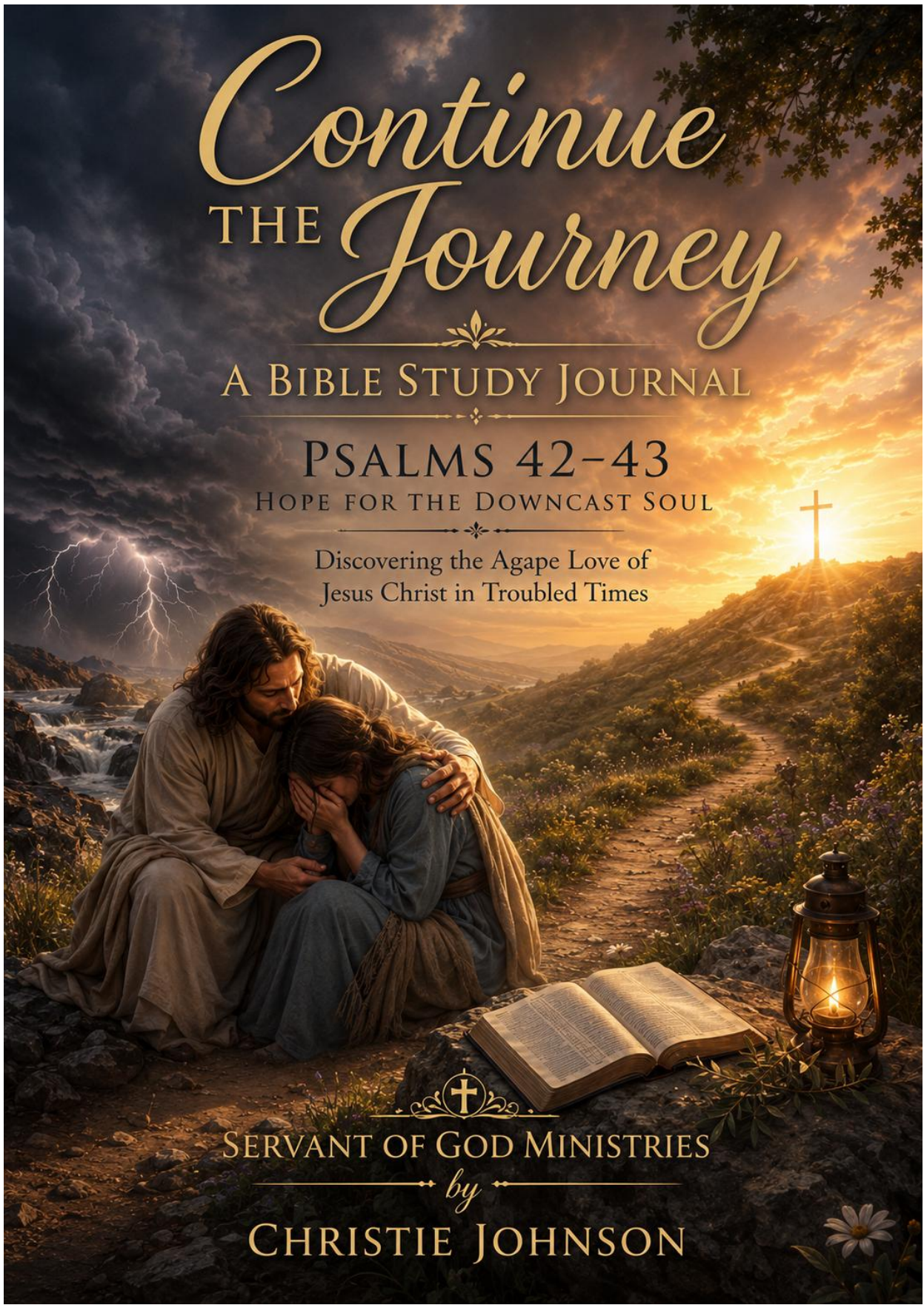




Continue THE Journey

A BIBLE STUDY JOURNAL

PSALMS 42-43

HOPE FOR THE DOWNCAST SOUL

Discovering the Agape Love of
Jesus Christ in Troubled Times

SERVANT OF GOD MINISTRIES

by

CHRISTIE JOHNSON

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Continue the Journey

A Bible Study Journal

A Five-Paper Bible Study Series Based on

Choosing Christ in the Middle of the Battle

Five Bible Studies That Renewed My Mind During One Difficult Week

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"Pointing people to the hope, healing, and transformation found in Jesus Christ."

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Continue the Journey

A Bible Study Journal

Volume 1

Five Psalms That Renewed My Mind During One Difficult Week

The Scriptures Jesus Christ Used to Renew My Mind, Strengthen My Faith, and Draw Me Back to Himself During One of the Hardest Weeks of My Life

Main Scripture

"Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path."

Psalm 119:105

Supporting Scripture

"We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith."

Hebrews 12:2

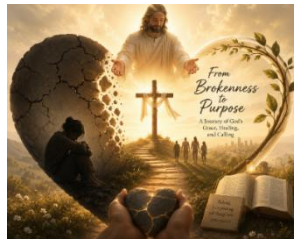
Prayerfully prepared by

Christie Johnson

Christie Johnson

Servant of God

"Pointing people to the hope, healing, and transformation found in Jesus Christ."





This Volume Includes

1. **Psalm 13** — Learning to Trust God When He Feels Silent
2. **Psalm 27** — Choosing Confidence in the Lord
3. **Psalm 34** — God's Nearness to the Brokenhearted
4. **Psalms 42–43** — Hope for the Downcast Soul
5. **Psalm 73** — When Our Perspective Needs God's Truth
6. **Psalm 139** — Fully Known, Fully Loved
7. **Psalm 147** — The God Who Heals the Brokenhearted

Begin with the Psalm that speaks to your present season or journey through each study in order as the Lord leads you.



Preparing My Heart Before the Study

July 27, 2026 | 11:00 a.m.

Why I Began This Study

As I sat down to spend time with God, I was not looking for answers concerning anyone else. I was seeking encouragement, understanding, and guidance for myself. This time was about allowing God to begin healing me. I knew that I needed to focus on what He was doing within me before I could help another hurting soul.

I had prepared a list of Scriptures that I wanted to study slowly. I did not want to rush through them. I wanted to take my time, listen carefully for God's voice, and allow Him to speak to my heart. I also prepared a list of gospel songs because worship is one of the ways God helps me understand His truth more clearly.

My desire was to allow the Holy Spirit to teach me, guide me, encourage me, and place His truth within my spirit and mind. I wanted to listen, receive what God showed me, and obey Him.

My Prayer Before Beginning This Study

Thank You, God. Today my mind is a little anxious, and I am trying to understand what You want me to learn from this study. I ask You to quiet my thoughts, remove the distractions around me, and give me clarity. Help me close my eyes, listen for Your voice, and allow You to speak to my heart. Your Word says, **"Send out your light and your truth; let them guide me" (Psalm 43:3)**. Lord, let Your light and truth guide me today.

Thank You for **calming** my mind and helping me slow down long enough to hear You. Continue speaking clearly to me through Your Word and through the Holy Spirit. Jesus, You said that Your sheep listen to Your voice, You know them, and they follow You **(John 10:27)**. Help me recognize Your voice above every anxious thought, painful memory, and lie from my past.

Thank You for never leaving me. Whenever I fall, You do not abandon me. You hold me, comfort me, and gently draw me back to Yourself. You help me understand where I fell and show me what still needs to change. Thank You for loving me patiently while You continue transforming me. I know I am not strong on my own, but Your Spirit helps me in my weakness and prays for me when I do not know what to say **(Romans 8:26)**.

Lord, my desire to please You drives me to know You more. It causes me to believe You, obey You, and continue moving forward when I fall. At times, that desire can hurt me when I begin expecting perfection from myself. I can become discouraged, feel

ashamed, and begin believing that I am a failure. Please remind me that those thoughts come from the lies of my past and not from You. You do not ask me to be perfect before You love me. You ask me to remain willing, surrendered, teachable, and dependent upon You.

I now understand more clearly why You chose me. You did not choose me because I was already strong or because I always get everything right. You chose me because You knew my heart and saw my desire to know You, obey You, and serve You. Thank You for continuing to work within me and for helping me become more like Jesus.

There are not enough words to express my gratitude, love, and thanks for You. It would take more years than I could ever live to come close to praising and worshiping You as much as You deserve. Thank You for Your patience, Your truth, Your mercy, and Your unfailing love. Thank You that nothing can separate me from the love You have given me through Jesus Christ (**Romans 8:38–39**).

I will continue opening my mind, my soul, and especially my heart to You. Continue guiding me, teaching me, correcting me, and helping me understand Your truth. Teach me to receive Your love and to show that same love to others.

Spirit, lead me today and forevermore.

In the name of Jesus Christ,
Amen.



The Music That Helped Prepare My Heart

As I prepared to study **Psalms 42–43**, I listened again to the same gospel and faith-based songs that had encouraged me during yesterday's study. Each song continued helping me redirect my thoughts, quiet the distractions around me, and turn my attention back toward Jesus. Music does not replace Scripture, prayer, or the work of the Holy Spirit, but God often uses it to settle my heart and prepare me to receive the truth of His Word.

Although the entire group of songs encouraged me, three songs spoke most strongly to what I needed today.

“Spirit Lead Me” became the prayer of my heart as I asked the Holy Spirit to guide my thoughts, give me clarity, and help me understand what Jesus wanted to teach me. I did not want to rely only upon my own emotions or interpretation. I wanted the Spirit of God to lead me into truth, remind me of what Jesus has taught, and help me recognize His voice above the lies and confusion within my mind (**John 14:26; John 16:13; Romans 8:14**).

“Lift Me Up” gave words to the weariness I still felt after the battle of the previous week. It reminded me that I do not have to lift myself out of every difficult emotional moment through my own strength. When my soul feels downcast and I become physically, mentally, or spiritually exhausted, Jesus remains near. He strengthens me when I am weak, carries me when I feel unable to continue, and helps me rise again (**Isaiah 40:29–31; 2 Corinthians 12:9**).

“Never Going Give Up” reminded me of the decision I continue making in my relationship with Jesus. I may become discouraged, overwhelmed, or uncertain, but I am not giving up on God, the calling He has placed upon my life, or the work He is accomplishing within me. More importantly, Jesus has never given up on me. When I fall, He draws me back, corrects my thinking, and gives me the strength to continue the journey with Him (**Philippians 1:6; Galatians 6:9**).

These three songs helped me most today because together they expressed exactly what my heart needed: **Holy Spirit, lead me; Jesus, lift me; and help me never give up**. They prepared me to enter **Psalms 42–43** with an open heart and reminded me that when my soul becomes downcast, I can still place my hope in God and trust that I will praise Him again (**Psalms 42:5; Psalm 43:5**).

I also listen to several other gospel and faith-based playlists throughout the week. Readers who would like to explore the music that has encouraged me can visit the **Ministry Library** to download the gospel and faith-based song lists I use during prayer, worship, and personal Bible study.

These songs helped quiet my heart, but it was the Word of God that revealed the truth Jesus wanted me to understand.



Bible Study Journal

Day 4 — Psalms 42–43

Hope for the Downcast Soul

Learning to Speak God's Truth When My Emotions Become Overwhelmed

Main Question

What is Jesus teaching me through **Psalms 42–43** about responding when my soul becomes downcast and the wounds of my past begin speaking again?

Psalms 42–43

The Struggle of a Downcast Soul

Psalms 42 and 43 are closely connected and are often understood as one continuous prayer. Both contain the same repeated refrain: the psalmist questions why his soul is downcast, then directs himself to place his hope in God and trust that he will praise Him again.

“Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Savior and my God!” Psalm 42:5, 11; Psalm 43:5

Psalm 42 is attributed to the descendants of Korah, Levites who served in Israel's worship. The **psalmist** appears separated from Jerusalem and unable to join the worship he once enjoyed. He remembers going to the house of God with joy, but now he feels isolated, overwhelmed, and spiritually thirsty (**Psalm 42:1–4**). His tears and questions reveal real suffering, yet they do not remove his desire for God.

Psalm 43 continues the same prayer. The psalmist asks God to defend and rescue him, but his deepest request is for God's light and truth to guide him back into His presence (**Psalm 43:1–4**). He wants more than changed circumstances. **He wants renewed fellowship with God, whom he calls his greatest joy.**

Together, these psalms move through longing, grief, questioning, hope, guidance, and praise.

The psalmist moves back and forth between sorrow and trust, repeatedly returning his attention to God. His struggle shows that faith and emotional pain can exist at the same time.

He does not condemn himself for feeling downcast, but neither does he allow discouragement to speak without being challenged. He acknowledges what he feels, then answers his emotions with what he knows about God.

This is why these **psalms** spoke so clearly to me. They were written from the middle of the struggle, not after everything had been resolved. They showed me that a downcast soul can still belong to God. I can grieve, ask difficult questions, and still continue seeking Him. The same God who received the psalmist's honest prayer continues receiving mine.

Remembering Without Returning

As I reflected on Psalm 42:4,

"My heart is breaking as I remember how it used to be; I walked among the crowds of worshipers, leading a great procession to the house of God, singing for joy and giving thanks amid the sound of a great celebration!"

I understood the pain of remembering an earlier season. The psalmist remembered worshiping among God's people with joy. My memories carried a different weight. I remembered the angry, defensive, and wounded person I had been before I truly began knowing Jesus. **Years of rejection, abuse, grief, chronic pain, disappointment, and loneliness had taught me to protect myself through anger, withdrawal, and emotional walls.**

During the previous week, some of those old emotions resurfaced. They frightened me because I did not want to return to the person the pain had created. Yet Jesus showed me that remembering who I once was did not mean I had become that person again.

In the past, I often accepted my emotions as truth and acted from them. Today, I bring them to Jesus, compare them with Scripture, and ask the Holy Spirit to show me what is true. I may still feel an old reaction, but I no longer have to surrender my identity or behavior to it.

The memories showed me where I came from, but Jesus showed me how far He has brought me. I am not returning to the person pain created; I am continuing to become the person Jesus is forming. His work is still continuing (**Philippians 1:6**). The return of an old wound does not mean Jesus has failed. It may reveal another place that needs His truth, healing, and grace.



The Lies Beneath My Emotions

As I examined what had happened during the week, I recognized familiar messages beneath my emotions: I am unlovable, unwanted, unworthy, always wrong, a failure, and a troublemaker. Painful experiences had repeated these beliefs until they felt true. Silence could feel like abandonment, disappointment could feel like rejection, and one mistake could make me believe that everything I did was wrong.

Jesus began separating what I felt from who I am. I may feel unloved, but that does not mean I am unlovable. I may feel unwanted, but that does not mean Jesus has rejected me. I may make a mistake, but that does not make me a failure. **My emotions describe what I am experiencing; they do not possess the authority to define me.**

God demonstrated His love while I was still in need of grace, and Jesus chose me knowing every wound and unfinished area within me (**Romans 5:8**).

“You didn’t choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using his name.” John 15:16

Other people may misunderstand me or be unable to love me as I need, but their limitations do not determine my identity. I belong to Christ.

Jesus also changed how I understand the label “troublemaker.” I do not want to create conflict or hurt people. However, following Jesus may require me to challenge lies, confront harmful patterns, defend broken people, and speak biblical truth when it is unpopular. I want to do that with humility, wisdom, love, and obedience—not from anger or pride.

Jesus exposed the lies patiently rather than humiliating me, and He can do the same for others. Through Scripture and the Holy Spirit, He helped me recognize that some powerful thoughts came from old wounds rather than the full truth of my present situation. Familiarity does not make a lie true. The enemy accuses without hope, but Jesus speaks truth with grace.

Therefore, when my past tells me that I am unwanted, unworthy, or destined to fail, I will answer with what Jesus says. I am loved, chosen, redeemed, adopted, and being transformed.

“So, you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him “Abba, Father.” For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s Children.” Romans 8:15–16

“He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.” Ephesians 1:7

“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

I am God’s workmanship, created for the purpose He has prepared for me, and His power can work through my weakness (**2 Corinthians 12:9**).

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” Ephesians 2:10

My past may explain why certain thoughts feel powerful, but it does not have the authority to define me. **Jesus Christ has that authority.**



Speaking Truth to My Soul and Seeing Jesus Work

The repeated refrain in **Psalms 42–43** taught me that I cannot allow every thought or emotion to speak without being answered. **The psalmist** admitted that his soul was downcast, questioned the turmoil within him, and then directed himself to place his hope in God (**Psalms 42:5, 11; Psalm 43:5**).

His repetition showed me that speaking truth is not always a one-time event. I may pray, feel calmer, and later experience another wave of sadness, fear, or anxiety. Physical pain and exhaustion may make everything feel heavier. The return of the struggle does not mean that truth failed or that I have made no progress. **It means I must continue returning my mind to God’s Word.**

When I ask why my soul is downcast, I am not condemning myself. I am inviting Jesus to help me understand what is happening. Anger may be covering pain, defensiveness may be protecting fear, and withdrawal may be an attempt to avoid rejection. Jesus is teaching me to pause before reacting from that wounded place, bring the feeling to Him, and ask the Holy Spirit to show me what is true.

Taking my thoughts captive does not mean denying painful emotions. It means examining whether a thought agrees with the Word and character of **Jesus (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 10:5)**. A thought may arise from genuine pain and still lead me to a false conclusion.

Hope is often an act of trust before it becomes a feeling. My security cannot depend entirely upon whether the pain disappears, another person understands me, or my circumstances change quickly. Jesus remains faithful when I feel unsettled, present when I struggle to sense Him, and loving when others fail to understand me.

The **psalmist** declared that he would praise God again. During the previous week, praise did not always come easily, yet Jesus continued drawing me back through prayer, Scripture, worship, and the Holy Spirit. Sometimes praise began through tears with one simple truth: Jesus is still here, He is still good, and I still belong to Him.

The central story of this study is not only what I experienced but what Jesus did while I was experiencing it.

He did not withdraw because I was anxious, frustrated, exhausted, or confused. When I stopped, prayed, and asked Him to calm my mind, He helped me become quiet enough to listen. My circumstances did not immediately change, but something within me began changing. My thoughts became less scattered, and I could distinguish more clearly between my emotions and His truth.

“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6–7

“Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” Matthew 11:28–30

Jesus exposed the lies without shaming me. He reminded me that painful emotions may reveal where healing is needed, but they do not define my identity. My identity is not based upon how well I handled one difficult week or how others treated me. It rests in what Jesus has done and in the person He continues forming me to become.

He also helped me rise. One wrong reaction did not erase years of spiritual growth. Through Scripture, prayer, worship, and the Holy Spirit, Jesus helped me understand what happened, receive correction, and move forward. He did not merely tell me to get up; He supplied the grace and strength I needed.

Jesus did not always remove the storm immediately, but He anchored my soul so the storm would not carry me away.

“This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God’s inner sanctuary.” Hebrews 6:19

He used the battle to uncover wounds, correct distorted beliefs, deepen my dependence upon the Holy Spirit, and teach me how to return to truth.

My downcast soul did not drive Jesus away. It became another place where He revealed His patience, love, and power. He met me while I was still confused, comforted me while He taught me, and helped me rise after I fell. What Jesus did for me during this battle reminded me that He still meets hurting people today with the same truth, grace, patience, and love.

The battle revealed my weakness, but it revealed His faithfulness even more clearly.



Grace, Growth, and the Work of the Holy Spirit

One of the most important truths Jesus reinforced is that He does not require me to become perfect before He loves, teaches, or uses me.

I still make mistakes and respond in ways that do not fully reflect the person He is forming. Those moments do not end His work. They reveal where I still need grace, correction, and healing.

For much of my life, I connected mistakes with shame. I did not merely believe that I had made a mistake; I believed I was the mistake. Jesus is teaching me that His correction is not rejection. When I confess, He forgives and cleanses me (**1 John 1:8–9**). A wrong response may require repentance, apology, and change, but it does not erase my identity in Christ.

My desire to please God is good, but it becomes harmful when I turn it into a demand for perfection. I do not obey Jesus to earn His love. I obey because He has already loved and saved me. My obedience is a response to grace, not payment for it.

Spiritual maturity is not proven by never struggling. It is shown by continuing to bring the struggle to Jesus. I am learning to replace “I must never fall” with “Jesus, when I fall, help me return to You quickly.” My hope is not in perfect performance but in the faithfulness of Christ, who began His work in me and continues it.

I am not expected to accomplish this transformation alone. Jesus has given me the Holy Spirit, who teaches, guides, strengthens, and intercedes for me (**John 14:26; John 16:13; Romans 8:26–27**). He helped move Scripture from something I understood intellectually into truth I needed to believe personally.

When old lies returned, the Spirit reminded me that I am God's child (**Romans 8:14–16**). He continued drawing me toward Jesus through prayer, Scripture, worship, and truth. He also helped me pause before returning to anger, fear, defensiveness, or withdrawal.

My prayer, “Spirit, lead me today and forevermore,” now includes the hidden places of my heart.

I am asking Him to guide how I think, respond to pain, receive love, and become more like Jesus. Because He lives within me, I do not face my downcast soul alone.



Suffering, Surrender, and Faithfulness to Jesus

This study also required me to think carefully about suffering. I do not want to describe God as cruel, distant, or pleased by human pain. Scripture reveals Him as compassionate and near to the brokenhearted.

“Though he brings grief, he also shows compassion because of the greatness of his unfailing love. For he does not enjoy hurting people or causing them sorrow.”

Lamentations 3:32–33

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.”

Psalms 34:18

We live in a fallen world where sin, human choices, disease, injustice, loss, and physical weakness cause real suffering. Not every painful event can be reduced to one simple explanation.

Trials are not automatic evidence that God has abandoned me or that I lack faith. Jesus said that His followers would experience trouble, but He also declared that He had overcome the world (**John 16:33**). God's compassion does not always mean that He immediately removes suffering. Sometimes He changes the circumstances, and sometimes He gives the strength, truth, comfort, and presence needed to endure them.

There is an important difference between saying that God causes every painful event and saying that He can work redemptively within every circumstance.

“And we know God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.” Romans 8:28

Romans 8:28 does not mean that everything that happens is good. It means that God can work through all things according to His purpose. When trials are surrendered to Him, they can produce endurance, character, tested faith, and hope (**James 1:2–4; Romans 5:3–5**).

“So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So, when your faith remains strong through the trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.” 1 Peter 1:6–7

I do not rejoice because something hurts. I rejoice because suffering does not have the final word. Jesus can use what I endure to expose wounds, deepen my dependence upon Him, strengthen my faith, and increase my compassion. During this battle, I felt pressed, confused, and exhausted, but I was not abandoned or destroyed.

“We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed but not driven to despair. We are hunted down but never abandoned. Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies.” 2 Corinthians 4:8–10

This is part of what it means for me to suffer for Christ’s sake. I do not seek pain or pretend that it does not hurt. I choose to remain faithful so that the life, strength, and faithfulness of Jesus can be seen in the way He carries me through it. When I continue trusting Him, when He helps me rise, and when He brings me through what once seemed unbearable, He receives the glory.

My suffering does not become the center of the story; Jesus does.

The cross reminds me that God is not distant from suffering. Jesus entered human pain for the sake of redemption, and He remains present with His people in every trial. Revelation 21:4 also promises that suffering will not continue forever. Pain is real, but it has a boundary. God’s kingdom and promises are eternal.

The same truth is available to every believer. When others feel pressed, confused, exhausted, or overwhelmed, they can bring their pain to Jesus and trust Him to remain near. He may not remove every trial immediately, but He can strengthen them, sustain them, and reveal His life through them. As they continue choosing Christ in the middle of the battle, their suffering can become a testimony—not to the greatness of their pain, but to the greater faithfulness of Jesus.

My willingness to suffer for Christ does not mean that I enjoy pain or seek hardship. It means that I will not allow suffering to make me abandon Jesus, become bitter toward Him, or walk away from His calling. Taking up my cross means choosing obedience when faithfulness requires endurance, courage, sacrifice, or surrender (**Luke 9:23**).

Not every hardship is persecution for Christ. Some suffering comes from life in a fallen world, while some results from my own choices and requires repentance. Yet when surrendered to Jesus, painful experiences can deepen my compassion and teach me to listen without judging, speak truth without minimizing pain, and remain patient with people whose healing takes time.

My willingness also includes speaking biblical truth when it is unpopular and standing with broken people who are often ignored. This must be guided by humility, wisdom, and love. Rejection caused by arrogance or unnecessary conflict is not the same as suffering for Christ. I want my life and words to reflect both His truth and His grace.

The question is not whether I enjoy suffering. The question is whether I will continue choosing Jesus when following Him becomes difficult.

I want my answer to be yes—not because I trust my own endurance, but because I trust the One who has already shown that He will not leave me in the battle. Suffering is real, but it is not sovereign. Jesus Christ is sovereign, and He will have the final word.



Receiving the Love of Jesus and Reflecting It to Others

Agape love is not merely something I study or something Jesus commands me to give. It is the love He is teaching me to receive. It begins with God's character and is revealed through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (**John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9–10**). His love is patient, kind, truthful, hopeful, and enduring (**1 Corinthians 13:4–8**).

Because love often felt conditional in my past, I learned to fear that it could be withdrawn when I made a mistake, became emotional, or disappointed someone. Jesus

shows me a different kind of love. He corrects without rejecting, reveals what must change without discarding me, and remains present while transformation takes place.

Receiving His love means believing that it is not reserved for a stronger, more healed, or more perfect version of me. Jesus loves me now while He is still teaching and healing me.

His love does not depend upon my emotional stability, ministry success, academic progress, or perfect performance. I am known, chosen, redeemed, adopted, and still being transformed.

1 John 4:19 establishes the proper order: I love because He first loved me. I cannot faithfully reflect a love I continually resist receiving. As I become more secure in Christ, His love changes how I understand and respond to hurting people.

My experiences have taught me that a person's reaction may not reveal the whole story. Anger may be protecting pain, withdrawal may be protecting fear, and defensiveness may come from rejection or trauma. This does not excuse harmful behavior, but it helps me respond with wisdom and compassion. Because Jesus remained with me in my struggle, I want to remain present with others without judging them only by their weakest moment.

The comfort Jesus gives me is meant to flow into the way I minister to others.

"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in our troubles so that we can comfort others with the same comfort He has given us." 2 Corinthians 1:3–4

**I can listen, pray, encourage, teach Scripture, and point people toward Jesus.
However, I cannot become their savior.**

Only Christ can forgive sin, heal the deepest wounds, renew the mind, and produce lasting transformation.

Agape love is truthful as well as compassionate. It may require correction, honest conversation, boundaries, or refusing to participate in harmful behavior. Patience does not mean enabling sin or remaining in unsafe situations. Love and wisdom must work together. This love also calls me to humility. I cannot approach hurting people as though I have finished the journey. I am still learning, healing, and being transformed. My role is not to stand above them but to walk beside them while continually pointing them to Jesus.

Receiving Christ's love also changes why I serve. I do not have to build a ministry, help others, or complete every assignment perfectly to prove my worth. I serve because I am

already loved. I can care for people without making their response the measure of my identity or assuming responsibility for what only Jesus can do.

My wounds can make me defensive or, when surrendered to Christ, they can deepen my compassion. Because I know what it feels like to believe I am unlovable, I want others to know they are not beyond Christ's love. Because I know what it feels like to have a downcast soul, I want to remain present with those who are overwhelmed. Because Jesus corrects me without rejecting me, I want to speak truth with the same grace.

Agape love begins in the heart of God, reaches me through Jesus Christ, and flows outward through the Holy Spirit. I can love because He first loved me, remain because He remained with me, speak truth because He spoke truth to me, and offer hope because He met me when my soul was downcast.



Romans 8: Secure in the Love and Purpose of God

Romans 8 brought together many of the truths Jesus had already been teaching me through **Psalms 42–43**. When my soul became downcast, I struggled with fear, shame, weakness, and old beliefs about being unwanted.

Romans 8 answered those fears by reminding me that my relationship with God is secured through Jesus Christ, not through my ability to handle every battle perfectly.

The chapter begins by declaring that there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.

“So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1

This distinction was important because I often confused conviction with condemnation. The Holy Spirit leads me toward confession, forgiveness, and transformation.

Condemnation tells me that I am hopeless, disqualified, and no longer wanted by God.

Romans 8 reminds me that Jesus dealt with my condemnation through the cross.

This does not mean that my choices no longer matter. It means that when I fall, I do not have to remain trapped beneath shame. I can acknowledge what happened, receive Christ's correction, and return to Him. Jesus reveals what still needs healing so He can continue renewing my mind and forming His character within me.

Romans 8 also reminds me that I am not facing this process alone. **The Holy Spirit lives within believers, leads us as God's children, and confirms that we belong to Him (Romans 8:9–16).** When my emotions told me that I was unwanted, the Spirit reminded me that I had been adopted into God's family. One difficult moment did not change my identity. I was still God's child. The Spirit also helps me in my weakness and intercedes when I do not know how to pray (**Romans 8:26–27**). During the battle, there were times when my thoughts were tangled and I could not fully explain what I was feeling. I did not have to organize every emotion before coming to God. The Holy Spirit understood what I could not express and carried my deepest needs before the Father.

Romans 8:28–29 helped me understand God's redemptive purpose more carefully. The passage does not say that everything that happens is good. It says that God works through all things for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. That purpose includes conforming believers to the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Even a painful week does not have to be wasted. Jesus can use it to expose lies, reveal wounds that still need healing, deepen my dependence upon the Holy Spirit, and teach me to respond more like Him. My confidence is not that every experience will feel good, but that God can work through every surrendered experience for His transforming purpose.

Romans 8 also reminds me that God knew me, called me, and continues His work within me (**Romans 8:29–30**). My calling was not erased because I struggled. One emotional reaction did not cancel God's purpose for my life. He knew every weakness and unfinished place before He called me, yet He still chose to make me His own and form me into the likeness of His Son. The closing verses gave my downcast soul the assurance it needed most. If God is for me, no accusation can overturn what Jesus has accomplished. Christ died, was raised, and now intercedes for His people (**Romans 8:31–34**). Jesus was not standing at a distance condemning me. He was advocating for me, drawing me back toward truth, and giving me grace to rise.

Nothing—not trouble, hardship, rejection, fear, weakness, spiritual conflict, or painful memories—can separate me from the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ (**Romans 8:35–39**). My emotions may interfere with my ability to feel secure in His love, but they cannot change the love itself. When I felt as though I was barely holding on, **Romans 8** reminded me that Jesus was still holding me.

My response is to stop measuring God's love by my emotions or performance. I can confess when I am wrong without believing that I am condemned. I can admit weakness without assuming that I have been abandoned. **Romans 8** gives me confidence to keep choosing Christ in the middle of the battle. I am His child, the Holy Spirit is helping me, Jesus is interceding for me, and God is still working through my life according to His purpose.



Job 4:

Being Careful How I Represent God to Those Who Suffer

Job 4 records the first response of Eliphaz, one of the friends who came to comfort Job after his devastating losses. At first, Eliphaz speaks respectfully and remembers how Job had strengthened others. However, he soon begins suggesting that Job's suffering must be connected to wrongdoing. He assumes that those who suffer must have brought trouble upon themselves (**Job 4:7–8**).

Some of what Eliphaz says contains general truth. Human beings are limited before a holy God, sinful choices can produce consequences, and no one is righteous through personal merit alone. His mistake was applying those truths to Job without understanding Job's situation. The reader knows from **Job 1–2** that Job's suffering was not punishment for hidden rebellion. He was a faithful man enduring a spiritual battle he could not see.

Job 4 must therefore be read as the words of Eliphaz, not as God's final explanation of suffering. Later, God rebukes Job's friends because they did not speak accurately about Him (**Job 42:7**). Eliphaz's greatest error was assuming that his limited understanding gave him the right to explain why Job was suffering.

This warning applies directly to my life and calling. When someone is grieving, sick, traumatized, emotionally overwhelmed, or enduring circumstances they do not understand, I must not assume that their pain proves they have sinned, lacked faith, or disappointed God. Some suffering does result from personal choices and requires repentance, but Job's story shows that faithful people can also experience profound anguish without being rejected by God.

Job 4 also teaches me that words can sound spiritual while still misrepresenting God. Eliphaz spoke about holiness, justice, and consequences, but instead of helping Job carry his grief, his words added accusation to his pain. I do not want to minister to broken and spiritually weary people that way. I want to listen before explaining, show compassion before correcting, and distinguish carefully between biblical conviction and personal assumptions.

This chapter also corrects how I speak to myself. When suffering returns, I can become my own Eliphaz. I may assume that because I am hurting, I must have failed God or caused Him to withdraw. I may interpret one emotional struggle as evidence that

everything in my spiritual life is wrong. Yet pain is not automatic proof of condemnation.

My response is to bring my life honestly before Jesus and allow the Holy Spirit—not fear, shame, or the opinions of others—to reveal what is true. When I have sinned, I want to repent. When I need healing, I want to receive His care. When I do not understand, I want to remain humble enough to trust Him without inventing an explanation.

Job 4 reminds me to speak carefully about God in the presence of suffering. I can trust His sovereignty without claiming that every painful circumstance is punishment. I can uphold His truth without removing His compassion. Most importantly, I can point people toward Jesus Christ, who entered human suffering, understands weakness, and offers mercy and grace to those who draw near to Him.

I may not always understand why suffering is allowed, but I know how I want to respond: with honesty before God, humility about what I do not know, compassion toward those who hurt, and continued confidence in Jesus. Sometimes the most faithful response is to keep seeking God while admitting that I do not yet understand.



Jesus Is My Rock, My Stability, and the Foundation of My Calling

Through **Psalms 42–43, Romans 8, and Job 4**, Jesus revealed that my confidence cannot rest in my emotions, the opinions of others, or my ability to respond perfectly in every battle. All of those things can change. Jesus does not.

He must remain the Rock beneath my life and the foundation beneath the calling He has given me.

The **psalmist** called **God his Rock** even while feeling forgotten and overwhelmed (**Psalms 42:9**). His circumstances made him feel unstable, but God’s character remained unchanged. This helped me understand that Jesus does not stop being my stability when I feel emotionally unsteady. He remains faithful when my thoughts become confused, present when old wounds return, and strong when I recognize my weakness.

Jesus is also the cornerstone upon which my life and ministry must be built.

“Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.” Ephesians 2:20–21

My calling cannot rest upon my accomplishments, education, ministry plans, personal strength, or the approval of others. Those things may be useful, but they cannot carry the weight of my identity or purpose. Jesus alone can do that.

During this battle, old lies caused me to question whether I was qualified to serve God. **Romans 8** answered that fear by reminding me that God knew me, called me, and is conforming me to the image of His Son (**Romans 8:28–30**). My calling did not begin with my perfection, and it will not be sustained by my perfection. **It began with God's purpose and continues through His grace.**

Job 4 also taught me that I must remain humble about what I do not understand. I do not want to minister to hurting people by assuming that I already know why they suffer. I want Jesus to teach me to listen carefully, speak truth compassionately, and avoid placing guilt upon people He is drawing near to heal.

My life experiences help me recognize pain, but they do not make me the answer to another person's suffering. Jesus is the answer. I can listen, pray, teach Scripture, encourage, and walk beside others, but only Christ can heal the heart, renew the mind, forgive sin, and produce lasting transformation.

This battle did not end my calling. It clarified how I must walk in it. I must remain close to Jesus, dependent upon the Holy Spirit, grounded in Scripture, willing to receive correction, and careful in how I speak to wounded people.

Jesus is not only the One who called me; He is the One who will sustain the calling. He is my Rock when my emotions are unsettled, my cornerstone when I need direction, and my source of hope when the path ahead feels difficult. Because He remains my foundation, I can move forward—not because every wound is healed or every weakness is gone, but because He is still teaching me, strengthening me, and calling me to serve the brokenhearted.



How the First Four Studies Strengthened Me in the Battle

The first four studies in this series worked together to help me understand what Jesus was doing during one of the hardest weeks of my life. **Psalms 13** taught me that I could bring my honest questions to God without being rejected. **Psalms 27** taught me to choose confidence in the Lord while I was still waiting. **Psalms 34** reminded me that God remains near to the brokenhearted and worthy of praise even when suffering continues. **Psalms 42–43** then taught me how to speak truth to my own soul when my emotions became louder than what I knew about God.

Together, these studies showed me that spiritual growth does not mean I will never experience fear, anger, grief, confusion, or discouragement. It means that I am learning where to take those emotions and how to respond to them. I can lament honestly, wait confidently, praise through pain, and direct my downcast soul back toward hope in God.

Romans 8 strengthened this message by reminding me that I am not condemned, abandoned, or separated from the love of Christ. The Holy Spirit helps me in weakness, Jesus intercedes for me, and God continues working through my life according to His purpose (**Romans 8:1, 26–30, 34–39**). Job also taught me to remain humble about suffering. Pain does not automatically prove guilt, weak faith, or God’s rejection. I may not understand everything that happens, but I can remain honest before Him and careful not to misrepresent His character.

Psalms 42–43 also showed me that a downcast soul can still belong to God. My emotions may reveal pain, exhaustion, fear, and areas that still need healing, but they do not have the authority to define me. **Feeling unwanted does not mean that Jesus has rejected me, and one difficult reaction does not erase the transformation He has already accomplished.**

Jesus showed me that remembering who I once was does not mean I am returning to that person. I am not the person the pain had created. I am continuing to become the person Jesus is forming, and the work He began within me is still continuing (**Philippians 1:6**).

This study also clarified the nature of agape love. Jesus’ love is patient, truthful, sacrificial, and enduring (**1 Corinthians 13:4–8**). He corrects me without rejecting me, tells me the truth without humiliating me, and remains present while transformation takes place. I do not have to become perfect before He can love, teach, or use me. He calls me to remain willing, teachable, repentant, surrendered, and dependent upon the Holy Spirit.

This is how Bible study helps us during spiritual and emotional battles. Scripture may not remove the battle immediately, but it changes how we stand within it. God’s Word exposes lies, corrects distorted thinking, reminds us of His character, and gives us truth strong enough to answer our emotions.

These four studies did not merely help me survive one difficult week. Jesus used them to renew my mind, strengthen my faith, deepen my confidence, and propel me forward. Most importantly, He revealed what He was doing while my soul was downcast. He remained near, calmed my thoughts, exposed the lies, reminded me who I am, helped me rise, and anchored my soul in hope.

The battle showed me my weakness, but it revealed His faithfulness even more clearly.



Renewed Confidence in My Calling

This study gave me greater confidence that the battle did not disqualify me from my calling. Jesus used it to expose places where I still need healing, deepen my dependence upon the Holy Spirit, and increase my compassion for hurting people. I do not have to minister as though I have completed the journey. I can serve honestly, humbly, and biblically while continually pointing others toward Jesus.

My calling rests upon Christ rather than my perfection. He is the cornerstone of my life and ministry ([Ephesians 2:20–21](#); [1 Peter 2:6](#)). I can listen, teach, encourage, pray, and walk beside broken people, but Jesus alone can heal the deepest wounds and renew the mind. I now move forward with greater confidence because the One who called me is still teaching me, strengthening me, and sustaining the work He began.

The battle did not stop my calling. Jesus used it to refine how I will walk in it.

Willing, Surrendered, and Chosen to Reveal Jesus Through Suffering

God does not expect me to be perfect, because I cannot become perfect through my own strength. He asks me to remain willing, surrendered, and dependent upon Him. He can use even my suffering to help other hurting people see Jesus—His power in my weakness, His love in my pain, and His truth in the middle of their own battles. Paul wrote that God comforts us in our troubles so that we can comfort others with the same comfort He has given us ([2 Corinthians 1:3–4](#)). He also explained that through suffering, the life of Jesus can be revealed through us ([2 Corinthians 4:10](#)).

I have known this truth throughout the twenty years I have been learning to know God, but after reading these Scriptures today, I understand it more deeply. Jesus is not waiting for me to become flawless before He uses me. He is asking me to remain faithful and willing so that others can see what He can do through a life surrendered to Him. I am deeply grateful that He has chosen me to point suffering people toward His power, His love, His truth, and the hope found in Jesus Christ.



Final Statement

This study gave me two truths that I want to carry forward:

A downcast soul is not the same as an abandoned soul.

I am not returning to the person pain created; I am continuing to become the person Jesus is forming.

Psalms 42–43 taught me to speak hope to my soul. **Romans 8** assured me that I am secure in the love and purpose of God. Job taught me to remain humble, honest, and compassionate in the presence of suffering. Together, these passages showed me that my emotions may become overwhelmed, but Jesus remains faithful. I can move forward because my identity is not defined by my past, my pain, or one difficult moment. I am known, chosen, redeemed, adopted, and still being transformed. The Holy Spirit is working within me, Jesus is interceding for me, and nothing can separate me from His love (**Romans 8:26–39**). Therefore, when my soul becomes downcast, I will not allow the lies of my past to speak alone. I will answer them with the truth of Jesus Christ. I will place my hope in God, trust that I will praise Him again, and continue choosing Christ in the middle of the battle.

The battle revealed where I was still wounded, but Jesus revealed that He was still working.

Prayerfully prepared by

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Servant of God

“Pointing people to the hope, healing, and transformation found in Jesus Christ.”

