

The background of the slide features a close-up, high-resolution image of a wood grain, likely oak, with warm, golden-brown tones and prominent, wavy lines. A dark blue, semi-transparent rectangular overlay is positioned on the right side of the image, containing the title and author information. A white L-shaped graphic element is located on the left side of the dark blue rectangle, with a vertical line extending upwards and a horizontal line extending to the left.

# When God Says “No”

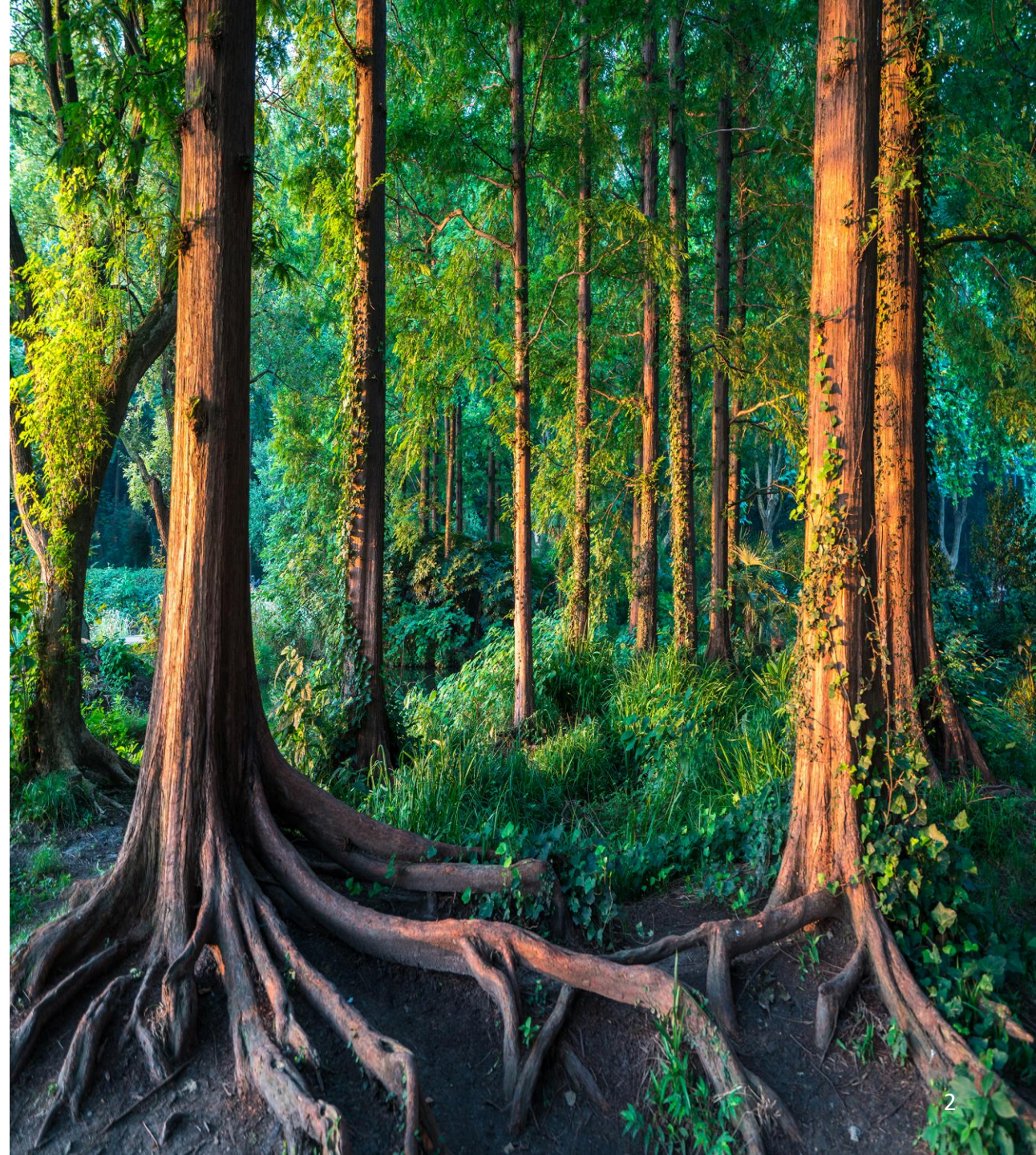
Caley Mitchell

*Faith Church Women's Retreat 2025*



# Agenda

- I. Welcome & Testimony
  - II. Lament
  - III. Common Pitfalls & Temptations
    - I. Self-Pity
    - II. Doubt, Unbelief, Despair
    - III. Shame
  - IV. Receiving Love/Accepting Help
  - V. Puddles for Jesus: Serving in Brokenness
  - VI. Discussion
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# Offering our unmet expectations to God

“No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.”

- Psalm 84:11

“He says no in order that He may, in some way we cannot imagine, say yes. All His ways with us are merciful. His meaning is always love.” – Elisabeth Elliot

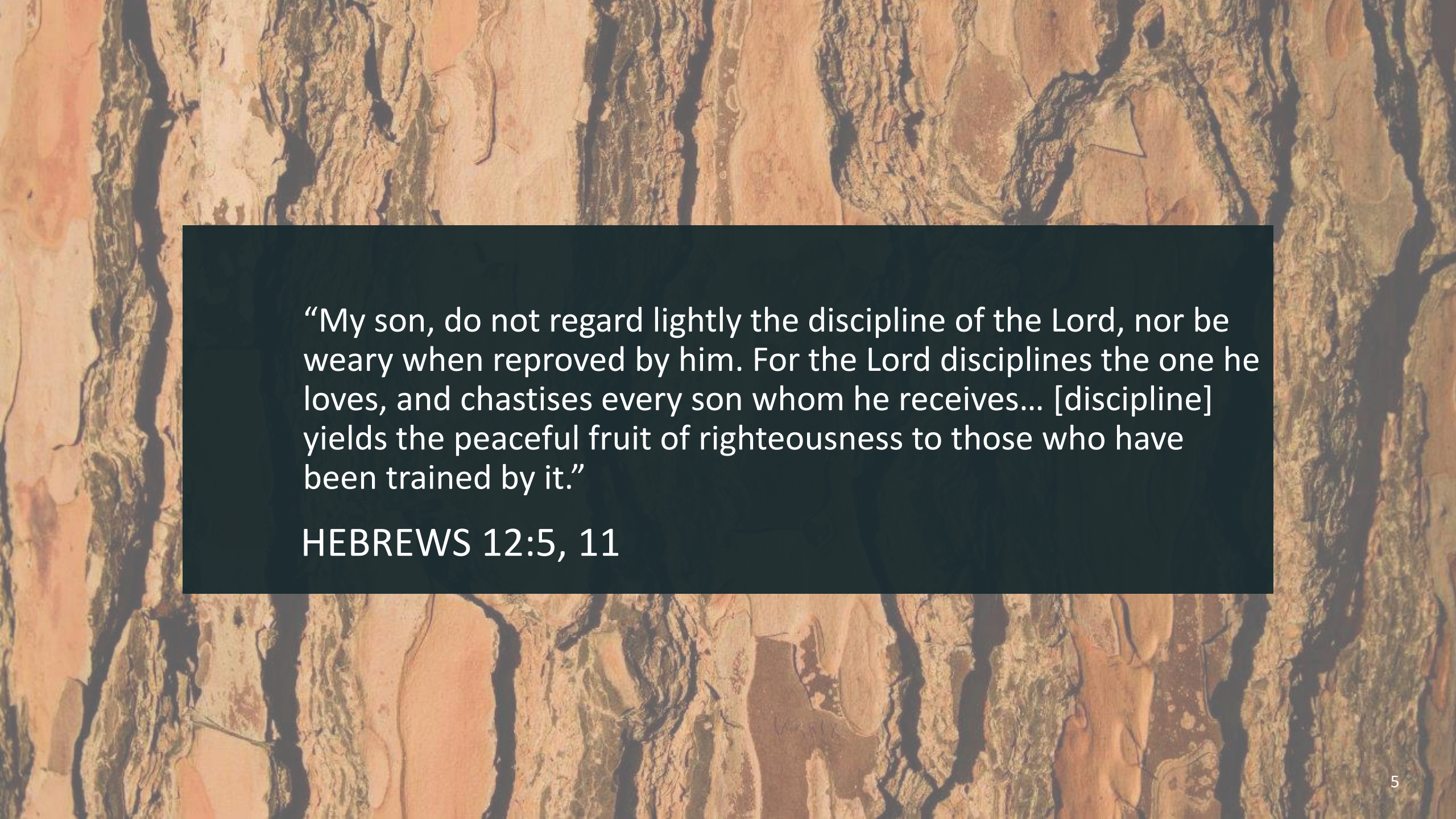


# My Story

*“God has met me...with a view of his LIMITLESS power, all-wise providence, and inextinguishable hope. God has used my brokenness to birth something precious in me—deep and abiding faith and dependence on him.”*

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“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives... [discipline] yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

HEBREWS 12:5, 11



FOREWORD BY JONI EARECKSON TADA

# DARK CLOUDS

# DEEP MERCY

DISCOVERING THE GRACE OF  
LAMENT

MARK  
VROEGOP

Lament  
“A prayer of pain  
that leads to trust,”  
– Mark Vroegop  
(*Dark Clouds, Deep  
Mercy*,  
pg. 28)



# Psalm 13

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

<sup>2</sup> How long must I take counsel in my soul  
and have sorrow in my heart all the day?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

Complaint

<sup>3</sup> Consider and answer me, O LORD my God;  
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,

<sup>4</sup> lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him,"  
lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

Request

<sup>5</sup> But I have trusted in your steadfast love;  
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

<sup>6</sup> I will sing to the LORD,  
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

Trust/Remembrance



# Numbers

## 20:2-5

2There was no water for the community, so they assembled against Moses and Aaron. 3The people quarreled with Moses and said, “If only we had perished when our brothers perished before the LORD.” 4Why have you brought the LORD’s assembly into this wilderness for us and our livestock to die here? 5Why have you led us up from Egypt to bring us to this evil place? It’s not a place of grain, figs, vines, and pomegranates, and there is no water to drink! ”



# *A Fatherly Heart...*

As a father shows compassion  
to his children, so  
the Lord shows compassion to  
those who fear him. For he  
knows our frame; he  
remembers that we are dust.

*PSALM 103:13-14*

The LORD is near to the  
brokenhearted and saves the  
crushed in spirit.


*PSALM 34:18*



*We worship God because he is worthy of our worship, not only because or when we FEEL like worshipping him. When we're in the hard place, we worship him while we wait to feel like worshipping him. Our worship is the kindling for the fire of faith. We keep piling it on, knowing that God WILL spark the blaze, even if we don't know when or how.*

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The background of the slide features a close-up, vertical view of a wood grain. The grain patterns are wavy and concentric, with colors ranging from light tan to deep, rich browns. A dark, semi-transparent rectangular box is positioned on the left side of the slide, containing white text.

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”  
- Jeremiah 17:9

*Lay your  
feelings on  
the altar of  
God’s  
TRUTH*



# Common Pitfalls: Self-Pity

## 1 PETER 4:12-13

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.



# Self-Pity

*“When we expect and even embrace suffering as an essential part of the Christian life, we are much better prepared to avoid the temptation to self-pity than if we view suffering as a sign that something is wrong.”*



# Remedy for Self-Pity: THE CROSS

*He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins...And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.*

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Colossians 1:13-14, 21-22





# Unbelief, Doubt and Despair

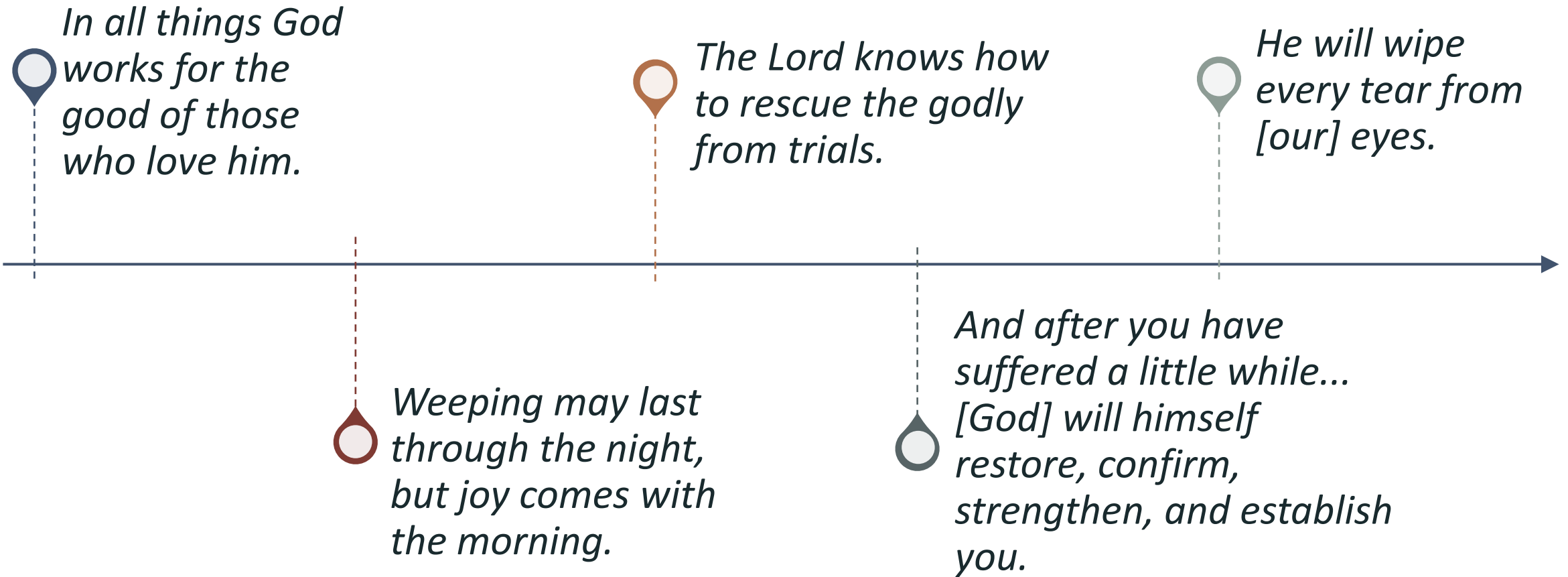
For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. **But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who RAISES THE DEAD.**

**2 CORINTHIANS 1:8-10**

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# Take Hold of God's Promises





# God's Character

- The Father of compassion and the God of all comfort – 2 Corinthians 1:3
- The God who gives endurance and encouragement – Romans 15:5
- Our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble – Psalm 46
- The Good Shepherd who holds fast his sheep – John 10
- Our helper who will not let your foot slip – Psalm 121
- God... rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us – Ephesians 2:4
- The Lord...the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth – Isaiah 40:28
- Our Redeemer who says, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine” – Isaiah 43:1
- The one who SEES, HEARS, and KNOWS our pain – Exodus 3:7
- And, our Deliverer, “I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD” – Jeremiah 1:8



# FIGHTING THE SIN OF DOUBT, UNBELIEF & DESPAIR

*We must wrestle with, meditate on, and preach the word to our hearts...Immerse yourself in the word—breathe it in until it is a part of you, the thoughts you think, the words you speak. Pray it back to God.*



The background of the slide features a close-up, vertical view of a wood grain. The wood has a rich, warm brown color with prominent, wavy, concentric growth rings that create a textured, organic pattern. The lighting highlights the natural grain and knots of the wood.

# Common Pitfalls & Temptations: Shame

*“It is no shame to call on Him for help in times of trouble. It is His delight to minister to us in our time of pain. There is no scandal in the mercy of God to the afflicted. He is like a Father who pities His children and moves to comfort them when they are hurting. To suffer without the comfort of God is no virtue. To lean upon His comfort is no vice.”*

– R. C. Sproul, teacher and theologian



*Our weakness just might be the qualification God is looking for in order to accomplish his work. Therefore, let us not be ashamed, but let us offer ourselves to God as useful instruments in the Potter's hand—vessels which display his glory however he should so choose.*

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# Who we are in Christ:

- Precious, honored and loved (Isaiah 43:4)
- God's special possession (1 Peter 2:9)
- Chosen (Ephesians 1:4)
- Forgiven (Psalm 103:12)
- Free (Romans 8:2)
- Strengthened (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)
- Well-provided for (Philippians 4:19)
- Well-made (Psalm 139:14)
- Known (Psalm 139:1)
- Victorious (Romans 8:37)
- Made New (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- Purposeful (Ephesians 2:10)
- Friends of God (John 15:15)
- Ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14)
- Blessed (Ephesians 1:3)



# Bringing Shame to Light

*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. – Galatians 6:2*

*But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light.*

– Ephesians 5:13

*Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.*

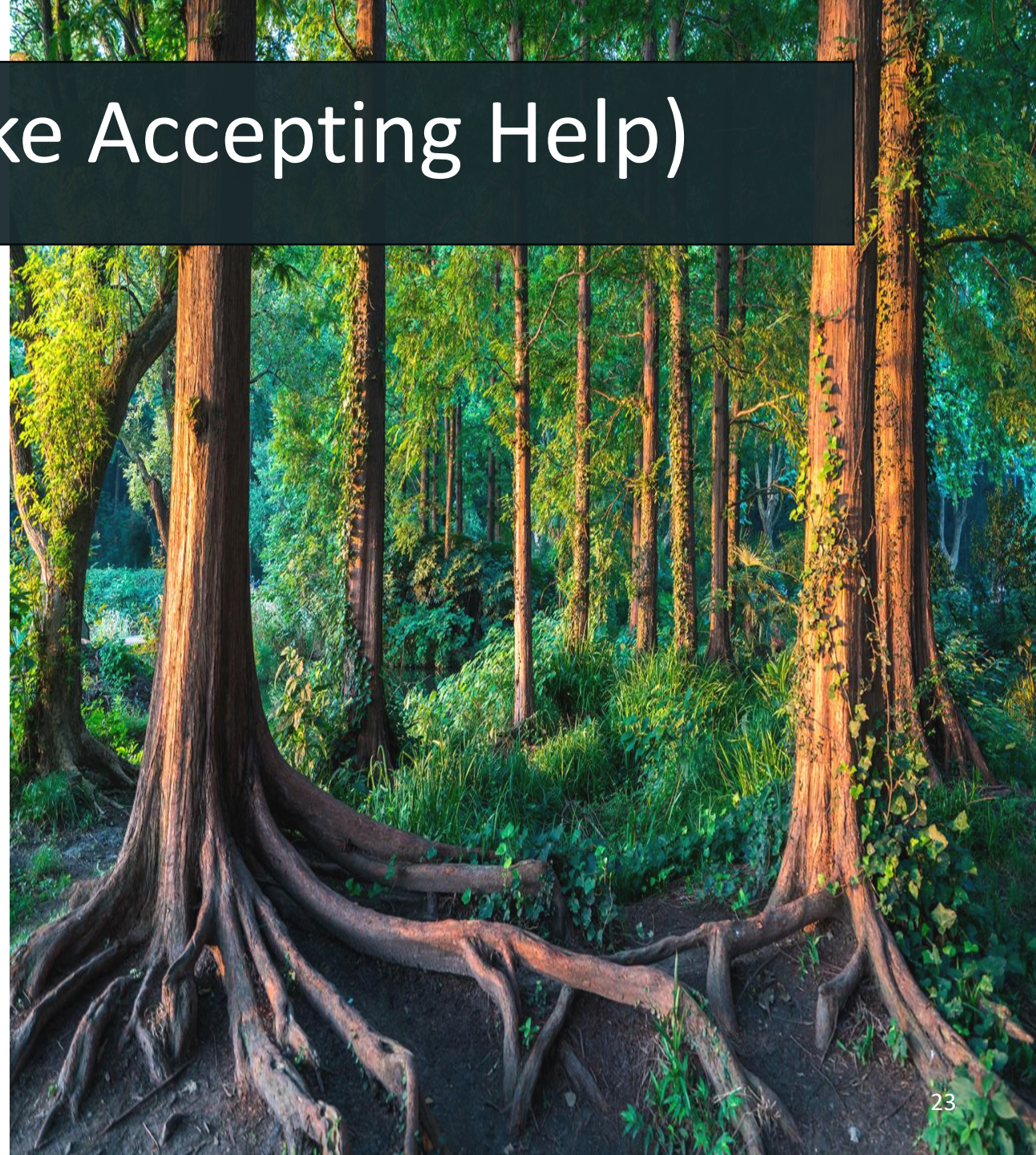
– James 5:16



# Receiving Love (Looks Like Accepting Help)

*“I have come to the conclusion that personal experiences of need and weakness are essential to the form and function of the body of Christ.”*

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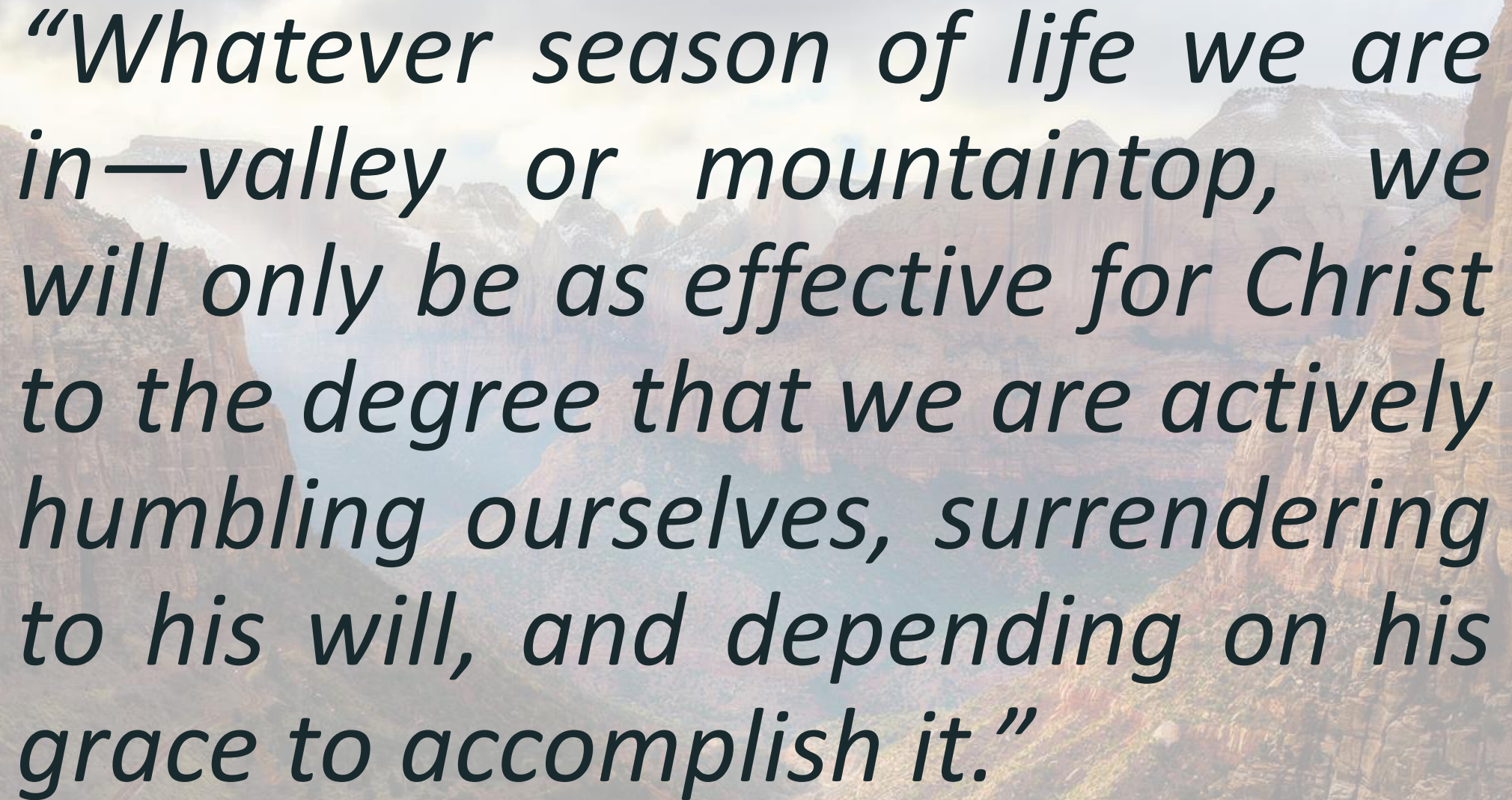




# 1 Corinthians 12:12, 21-26

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ...The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.





*“Whatever season of life we are in—valley or mountaintop, we will only be as effective for Christ to the degree that we are actively humbling ourselves, surrendering to his will, and depending on his grace to accomplish it.”*



*“Seasons of testing are God’s instruments to prune us, to grow our faith so that we might bear more spiritual fruit.”*

Puddles for Jesus: Serving Christ in our Seasons of Brokenness

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# Puddles for Jesus: Serving Christ in Seasons of Brokenness

*“When we depend on and cling to the Lord so nearly, we see his goodness in new and profound ways. We see his limitlessness, his faithfulness ... We experience an intimacy with him that stirs our affections for him and our desire for others to know him. Our pain can serve as a catalyst for the Lord’s compassion in us—to draw near to those we see hurting around us.”*



# Low-Bandwidth Serving:

1. Seek the Lord about what you want to do; wait for a 'yes'
2. Invite people into what you are already doing (presence over performance!)
3. Choose flexible or one-time commitments over long term, regular commitments
4. If you feel called to an ongoing commitment, budget your energy resources to meet this commitment (make it part of the rhythm of your life)
5. Use your spiritual gifts (what comes 'super/naturally' to you) to love others and build them up



# “Do the Next Thing”

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From an old English parsonage down by the sea  
There came in the twilight a message to me;  
Its quaint Saxon legend, deeply engraven,  
Hath, it seems to me, teaching from Heaven.  
And on through the doors the quiet words ring  
Like a low inspiration: “DO THE NEXT THING.”

Many a questioning, many a fear,  
Many a doubt, hath its quieting here.  
Moment by moment, let down from Heaven,  
Time, opportunity, and guidance are given.  
Fear not tomorrows, child of the King,  
Trust them with Jesus, *do the next thing*

Do it immediately, do it with prayer;  
Do it reliantly, casting all care;  
Do it with reverence, tracing His hand  
Who placed it before thee with earnest command.  
Stayed on Omnipotence, safe ‘neath His wing,  
Leave all results, *do the next thing*.

Looking for Jesus, ever serener,  
Working or suffering, be thy demeanor;  
In His dear presence, the rest of His calm,  
The light of His countenance be thy psalm,  
Strong in His faithfulness, praise and sing.  
Then, as He beckons thee, *do the next thing*.





# Discussion Time

Please form groups of 3-4 women

Follow the ABC's of sharing... **A**udible, **B**rief, **C**onsiderate



# RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

## Books

*Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers* – Dane Ortlund

*Suffering is Never for Nothing* – Elisabeth Elliot

*Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy* – Mark Vroegop

## Podcasts

*Light + Truth* – Desiring God

*Renewing Your Mind* – Ligonier Ministries

*The Elisabeth Elliot Podcast* – The Elisabeth Elliot Foundation

*Truth for Life Daily Program* – Alistair Begg

## Teachers

R. C. Sproul

Joni Eareckson Tada

John Piper





# My Lament

Fill in the blanks using the provided word banks or use this as a jumping off point to write an original prayer of lament with the structure: complaint, request, trust/remembrance.

## Names of God

<i>Everlasting Father</i>	<i>Lord</i>
<i>Creator</i>	<i>Almighty</i>
<i>Deliverer</i>	<i>Great I Am</i>
<i>Savior</i>	<i>Provider</i>
<i>Refuge &amp; Strength</i>	<i>Exalted One</i>
<i>King</i>	<i>The Lamb</i>

## Emotions

<i>Perplexed</i>	<i>Helpless</i>	<i>Anxious</i>
<i>Angry</i>	<i>Forgotten</i>	<i>Worried</i>
<i>Lonely</i>	<i>Unheard</i>	<i>Hopeless</i>
<i>Hurt</i>	<i>Devastated</i>	<i>Unloved</i>
<i>Grieved</i>	<i>Rejected</i>	<i>Empty</i>

(see back side)

### 1. Complaint:

\_\_\_\_\_, (name of God) how long will \_\_\_\_\_?

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_.

## 2. Request:

Please come and \_\_\_\_\_ me. Hear my cry for  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the situation.

### 3. Trust/Remembrance:

For I remember how you \_\_\_\_\_ in my life  
before when you \_\_\_\_\_.

You \_\_\_\_\_ in the Bible and you never change.

You are \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_.

I choose to trust you in such a time as this \_\_\_\_\_.

### Requests/Remembrances

<i>Deliver</i>	<i>Answer</i>	<i>Comfort</i>	<i>Rise Up</i>	<i>Remember</i>
<i>Help</i>	<i>Forgive</i>	<i>Strengthen</i>	<i>Give Justice</i>	<i>Lift up</i>
<i>Rescue</i>	<i>Satisfy</i>	<i>Give Endurance</i>	<i>Shield</i>	<i>Encourage</i>
<i>Save</i>	<i>Renew</i>	<i>Show Mercy</i>	<i>Protect</i>	<i>Defend</i>
<i>Heal</i>	<i>Restore</i>	<i>Vindicate</i>	<i>Show Favor</i>	<i>Draw near</i>

### Attributes of God

Faithful	Gracious	Mighty	Sovereign
Good	Kind	Limitless	Near
Holy	Compassionate	Strong	Comforting
Unfailing	Tender-hearted	Able	Blameless
Just	Steadfast	Willing	Righteous
Merciful	Loving	All-wise	Worthy

**Workspace:**

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