



# soulmind

Connecting you with God's heart

## Noticing In Hard Times

Lamentations 3:19-26; 31-33 (NLT)

Welcome to **Soulmind**.

Noticing and enjoying the presence of God is easier when things are going well.

But, what about those harder times, when you have hit the bottom, and it's all you can do just to get through the day - when you're consumed with worry, fear, insecurity, guilt, physical or emotional pain?

We all get there at times. You're not alone if you have wondered where God is to be found in the hard stuff.



[LISTEN TO THE DEVOTIONAL](#)  
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Be sure to check out the **SOUL PRACTICE** suggestion for this week (*see below*).

## Topic Overview

The brokenness inside us and of the world we live in can't be denied by happy talk or bland optimism. Nobody gets to escape the darkness, suffering, and injustice in our own lives and in the world around us. That's often when God seems to be silent, uncaring and so very far away.

But, remember that God can only be experienced in the reality of the present moment. So, this must include good AND bad, sunshine OR rain. We have a default tendency to think that God is loving and blessing us only when we are happy, healthy, successful, and perfectly behaved - and forget that His unconditional love never stops. His mercies are new every morning. His compassion never fails. He weeps with those who weep. His grace covers every sin. He has promised to never leave us alone, that He knows the bigger story and is working everything toward a good ending.

Christian faith is based on hope and confidence in the grace of God and in His power to save us, not in having everything go our way. Light in darkness, hope in despair, life in death; this is the reality of faith in good times and in bad. We wait in hope for the morning light because we know it is coming. And many who have walked through intense suffering will tell you that it was inside their pain, with nowhere else to turn, that they most deeply experienced the presence of Christ and peace that wasn't dependent on their external circumstances.

Joni Eareckson Tada, a woman well versed in living with suffering, says, "*Suffering is a strange, dark companion; but a companion, nonetheless. It's an unwelcome visitor, but still a visitor. Affliction is a bruising of a blessing; but it is a blessing from the hand of God... So, we take suffering as though taking the left hand of God - much better than not holding His hand at all.*"

And there's the rub; am I willing to see God and take His hand in the hard times? Is it possible to choose to see this trial as a blessing from God?

There is not a single circumstance that He isn't right there, waiting for you to notice Him, to see Him loving you in the middle of it all. He may not resolve the circumstance or pain in the way you would prefer, but you can choose to interpret your story in light of God's story, trusting in all that He is, all He has done, and all that He will do.

## Daily Scriptures

### MONDAY

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#### Lamentations 3:25-27 (NLT)

The Lord is good to those who depend on Him, to those who search for him. So it is good to wait quietly for salvation from the Lord. For no one is abandoned by the Lord forever.

### TUESDAY

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#### Lamentations 3:21-23

Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is His faithfulness; His mercies begin afresh each morning.

### WEDNESDAY

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#### Isaiah 55:8-9

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

### THURSDAY

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#### Psalms 32:4-6 (NLT)

Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.

### FRIDAY

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#### Psalms 56:8 (NIV)

You keep track of all my sorrows, you have collected all my tears on your bottle, you have recorded each one in your book.

## Doing Your Part

## SOUL PRACTICE

### Remembering God's Faithfulness

When you are worried or anxious about something, write down what you are concerned about on a piece of paper. Then, below that, write down every way God has been faithful to you in the last six months. This would be the times where you have noticed His blessings, gifts, and love in some way. By the time you finish that list, the thing troubling you will somehow seem much less consuming. Your perspective will have changed. If God has been faithful to you in these many ways, surely He will be again.

### Wise Words

*We can ignore even pleasure. But pain insists upon being attended to.  
God whispers to us in our pleasures,  
speaks in our conscience,  
but shouts in our pains:  
it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.*

C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

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