

How has David experienced God's closeness in the past? Does that knowledge seem to help him or hurt him now? In what ways?

Do you hear any evidence of faith being expressed by the psalmist? What does that indicate about his relationship with God?

Do you see a change in the psalmist's mood at the end? What do you think brought that about? What future hope does he express?

How does this psalm enlarge your relationship with God? Your willingness to allow Him access to all your emotions?

#### REFLECT

What does it mean to you that David and Jesus at times felt far from God?

#### RESPOND

Write down the name of a person in your group with whom you feel safe sharing your negative emotions. Between now and Christmas, make it a point to do so in a mutual way. Try praying or journaling your feelings before sharing them with this person.

Christmas  
dysFUNCTION

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# Christmas dysFUNCTION (keeping our balance)

Proverbs 4:26

Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm.

## Expectations...know Whose opinion matters most

1 Corinthians 4:3-4

I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

Mother Teresa  
*"If you judge people, you have no time to love them."*

Matthew 23:4

They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

Our church—any church—should be a safe place in which we can talk about our struggles, weakness, wounds, and difficulties.

Matthew 11:28-30

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

## Schedule...keep pace with the One worth following

Mark 6:30-32

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.

John Ortberg

*"If you want to follow someone, you can't go faster than the one who is leading; following Jesus cannot be done at a sprint. Jesus was often busy, but he was never hurried. Being busy is an outer condition; being hurried is a sickness of the soul."*

## Emotions...allow God to use them all

Matthew 5:4

Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.

Peter Scazzero in

*Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*

To feel is to be human... Our feelings are a component of what it means to be made in the image of God. To cut them out of our spirituality is to slice off a part of our humanity.

John 14:16-18, 26-27

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth...he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you...But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.

# (keeping our balance)

## life group study

### RELATE

Share a happy childhood Christmas memory.

What do you typically do when you experience negative emotions?

- Talk
- Withdraw
- Write it out
- Pray
- Call mom/dad
- Take a walk

What principle, insight, idea, or quote was meaningful to you from this week's sermon?

### READ

#### Psalm 22, Matthew 27:46

Rob advises that we let God use all our emotions. Psalm 22 is a lament written by King David, a "man after God's own heart." It is a prophecy about the messiah, and Jesus quoted the first line while on the cross.

How would you describe the overall emotional state of the psalmist? What internal and external challenges is David facing? What is he asking of God?

What words does David use to describe his relationship with God in the first two verses? How does this compare with what he has learned to expect from God (v. 3-5)?

How does the psalmist see himself (v. 6-10, etc)? When have you felt like he does? How did you deal with that?