



## Does God Feel Distant?

Have you ever experienced a time in your life where you felt like God was no longer close? That you did not feel God's presence? Did you ask yourself, *"Why am I feeling this way?"* I think there are seasons in every believer's life when God feels far away. Prayers seem like they are not reaching God. Scripture no longer brings comfort. Worship feels mechanical. And our heart wonders, *"Father, where are You?"*

This experience is not a failure—it's a familiar part of one's spiritual journey. Even David, the man after God's own heart, cried out, *"How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever?" (Psalm 13.1)*. Jesus Himself, while hanging in agony on the cruel cross of Calvary cried out, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27.46)*.

What do we do when God feels far from us? And why does spiritual distance seem to come with much confusion and shame? A lot of times, we assume that we've done something wrong. But it could be that God is not punishing us—He may be inviting us into deeper trust. When things feel silent, it doesn't necessarily mean absent. It may mean that God is trying to speak to you in a different way.

Then, there are times that the feeling of distance is our fault. The Old Testament prophet Isaiah said, *"But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear" (Isaiah 59.2)*. Unconfessed sin, bitterness, or spiritual neglect can cause God not to be nearby. But God's mercy is never far if we will turn to Him in repentance. God welcomes honest sorrow. Yes, we can lament and cry out in anguish just like the psalmist, *"How long, LORD, how long?" (Psalm 6.3)*. Or again, *"Why, O LORD, do you stand far away?" (Psalm 10.1)*. But until we are willing to acknowledge our failures and return to God, it will always feel that way.



When you feel far from God and you have not been the cause of separation, then you must let your faith lead. Keep praying. Keep reading. Keep showing up. The darkness of the valley will not last forever. Maybe it would help if you would remember the times when God did feel close. Journal them. Speak them out loud. Let the memory become a bridge back to hope. God's past faithfulness is fuel for present perseverance.

God's silence doesn't always mean His absence. He is nearer than your breath, even when He feels distant and beyond reach. The night may seem long, but morning always comes. And when it does, you will find that the God who seemed distant was walking beside you all along.

Gary

# Are We Still Questioning?

Matthew 22.15-17

- 1) Have you ever been asked a question that you didn't want to answer? Why?
- 2) The religious leaders continued to ask Jesus questions they thought He could not answer without incriminating Himself.
- 3) The final confrontation of Jesus in the temple by the Pharisees occurred just a day or so before He was arrested.

## The Final Confrontation Included...

### I) A Question About \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 22.15-22).

- A) Who is questioning Jesus?
- B) What about paying \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_?
  - 1) What's the trap?
  - 2) How \_\_\_\_\_ is a man who tries to \_\_\_\_\_ God.
  - 3) Do you realize that God knows everything about you? (Cf. Psalm 139.1-4)
- C) Are we giving God what is His?

### II) A Question About \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 22.23-32).

- A) Who were the Sadducees?
  - 1) The Sadducees endeavored to \_\_\_\_\_ the resurrection and \_\_\_\_\_ Christ who taught the resurrection.
  - 2) The Sadducees method of attack was to \_\_\_\_\_ (22.24; Deuteronomy 25.5).
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_ are one of the favorite attacks used by unbelievers.
  - 4) Jesus emphasized the importance of knowing the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
    - (a) What about \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven?
    - (b) How will we be like the \_\_\_\_\_?
- B) Do we live like the \_\_\_\_\_ is real?

### III) A Question About \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 22.33-40).

- A) The enemy of our soul does not give up easily.
  - 1) We may \_\_\_\_\_ temptation, but it will be back.
  - 2) The Pharisees approach Jesus again tempting Him.
- B) A lawyer asked, "**Teacher, what is the great commandment in the Law?**" (22.36).
  - 1) What did Jesus mean when He said, "**On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets?**" (22.40)
  - 2) How did the lawyer respond?
  - 3) The Pharisees desired \_\_\_\_\_ come out of the question, but \_\_\_\_\_ came instead.
  - 4) What did Jesus perceive about the man asking the question when He said, "**You are not far from the kingdom of God?**" (Mark 12.34)
- C) How far are we from the kingdom?

**Conclusion:** Are you ready to become part of the kingdom of God today?

# C O N N E C T I O N

## o The Great Debate:

R Few topics stir more lively discussion around the fellowship hall than the age-old question: Which is better—Blue Bell or homemade ice cream?

N Team Blue Bell argues that nothing beats the creamy consistency, the perfected flavors, and the convenience of opening that familiar half-gallon. What, with over 60 flavors to choose from, what's not to like? After all, when the banana pudding flavor hits the shelves, it doesn't last long!

R Team Homemade, on the other hand, insists that no store-bought brand can compete with the taste of fresh cream, sugar, and vanilla churned by hand (or by electric motor while the kids pile on the rock salt). Homemade ice cream, they say, comes with the added ingredient of love—and maybe a little sweat from the one turning the crank!

But maybe the real answer isn't about which ice cream is better. Maybe it's about who we're enjoying it with. Whether you scoop Blue Bell into a cone or ladle homemade vanilla out of a frosty metal canister, the sweetness is found in sharing it together—with family, friends, and brothers and sisters in Christ. For us "decorated veterans" of ice cream socials gone by, be ready to share some "cool" stories (pun intended) with the rookies.

So when our ice cream social on Sunday evening, Sept. 14th arrives and the debate arises, just smile and ask for a scoop of both. After all, "a joyful heart is good medicine" (Proverbs 17:22)... and maybe good ice cream is, too! Make plans to join us, you'll be blessed!

—Les Keele



  
**Ladies'**  
 Come to Ladies' Night  
 September 22 for an evening of  
 laughter and fun!  
 Watch the bulletin for more details or  
 see Jennifer Scott!

Join us for an Ice Cream Social after the  
 Sunday evening service on  
 September 14th. Please  
 bring your favorite ice  
 cream to share. Sign up  
 in the foyer. For  
 more details, see  
 Steve Taylor



## SHEPHERDS

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\*Shepherd of the month

## MINISTERS

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Robert Scott	817-246-0911
Matt Sloan	405-471-3404
Steve Taylor	817-291-2065
Buck Thomas	817-733-2620
Arthur Torrez	817-721-2726

## MORNING WORSHIP (10 AM)

**Welcome** - Garner

**Song Leader** - Russ Jones

**Song** - The Steadfast Love Of The Lord

**Song** - O Worship The King

**Song** - Highest Place

**Opening Prayer** - Chuck King

**Scripture** - Matthew 22.15-17

**Song** - Low In The Grave He Lay

**Lord's Supper** - Joe Gentry

**Prayer for Contribution** - Joe Gentry

**Song** - He Lives

**Are We Still Questioning?** - Gary Williams

**Song** - Nothing But The Blood

**Announcements** - Les Keele

**Shepherd's Prayer & Dismissal** - Greg Ball

Our Code for Tithe.ly

**Giving**



QR Code for

**Attendance**



**Attended Nursery:** After communion, we have an attended nursery available for ages birth to 3 years and a mother's nursing room.

Single-side in-ear mono earbuds with personal receivers are available for those with hearing difficulties. Please see the sound booth at the back of the auditorium for assistance.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

### Monday, September 8

Job 32 - 33; Psalm 103; Romans 3

### Tuesday, September 9

Job 34 - 35; Romans 4

### Wednesday, September 10

Job 36 - 37; Psalm 29; Romans 5

### Thursday, September 11

Job 38; Psalm 104; Romans 6

### Friday, September 12

Psalm 111; Job 39 - 40; Romans 7

### Saturday, September 13

Job 41 - 42; Romans 8

### Sunday, September 14

Hosea 1 - 2; Romans 9

### Last Week

<b>Bible Class</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Worship</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>Contribution</b>	<b>\$ 12,676.30</b>
<b>PM Worship</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>\$ 14,216.88</b>

### Times of Assemblies

<b>Bible Class:</b>	<b>9:00 AM</b>
<b>Sunday Morning Worship:</b>	<b>10:00 AM</b>
<b>Sunday Evening Worship:</b>	<b>5:00 PM</b>
<b>Wednesday Evening:</b>	<b>7:00 PM</b>