

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN GOD SEEMS DISTANT?

ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS

Read John 11:1–15.

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, “Lord, the one you love is sick.” (verses 1–2)

One of the most beautiful aspects of the Lazarus story is the faith of his sisters and the disciples. They all knew that Jesus could heal his friend. They believed in his power. They had seen with their own eyes the miracles that he had done for others. They knew that Jesus loved each of them and he loved Lazarus. Faith was not the issue. When Jesus delays his trip to the mourning family and friends of Lazarus, everyone is surprised. He had something larger in mind, though. By the time Jesus arrives to see the mourning family and friends, there are many people who are waiting to see him—people who didn’t yet have the faith of the sisters or disciples. The lives of everyone present that day would be changed because of what they would experience. When we don’t know why God is silent, we can trust that he is still in control. He is aware of our pain and loves us. Our faith in him can stay constant even while we wait and he works.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. Are you or someone you are close to currently waiting on God for an answer to a prayer? What is your attitude toward him or toward that situation right now?
2. Sometimes it’s hard for us to recognize the comfort God offers us when he seems silent. Can you think of a person who he has provided in your life to offer you wisdom, comfort, or hope? How else have you seen him provide in the midst of difficult times?
3. Have you ever seen God answer a prayer in your life or the life of someone you love? Make a list of every answered prayer you can think of. The point is to remember that God is faithful and in control even when we don’t understand his timing.

WHAT DO I DO WHEN GOD SEEMS DISTANT?

APPLY IT

While it may seem impossible to trust God in the midst of pain and suffering, we have the stories, lyrics, and art of thousands of Christians throughout history who have done just that. By reading and studying their work, we find hope, comfort, and even healing. If you don't know where to start, the book of Psalms is a great place! Or scroll through the lyrics of the top worship songs on your music streaming app. If you're into biographies, look up a list of the top Christian biographies and download one to listen to.