

Song of Solomon

A LOVE LIKE NO OTHER

WEEK 4

Longing for the Beloved



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Song of Solomon

A LOVE LIKE NO OTHER

INTRODUCTION

SOAP METHOD

SONG OF SOLOMON 3:1-5

1. THE PAIN OF ABSENCE
2. AWAKENING FROM RESTLESSNESS
3. ROAMING IN THE DARK
4. WHEN GOD ENCOUNTERS YOU
5. GRASPING THROUGH MYSTERY
6. THE POWER OF SACRED REST
7. THE MYSTERY OF HIS MOVEMENTS

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This 7-day study passionately guides you through the sacred terrain of spiritual longing—the "night seasons" when God feels silent and distant, moments that can leave us feeling adrift and alone. Drawing from the vivid imagery of

Songs 3:1-5, we embark on the bride's relentless search for her Beloved in the enveloping darkness, a journey that beautifully mirrors our own fervent pursuit of God during seasons of dryness, confusion, or sorrow. Each day is an immersive experience, filled with reflections that challenge and inspire, as we delve deeper into the heart of our spiritual yearning. Rather than offering quick fixes, this study invites you to linger in the profound mystery of longing—to see it as a sign of deep love, not failure, a reminder that the absence we feel can be the birthplace of a longing that draws us closer to the Divine. Through theological reflection, psychological insight, and God's Word of encouragement, each day eagerly explores how spiritual silence can ignite a deeper desire, cultivate refined trust, and prepare the soul for more intimate communication. With every passing day, you will discover that within the struggle lies an invitation to grow, to deepen your faith, and to embrace the tension of waiting as a sacred space where transformation can occur and a deeper awareness of God's presence can be unveiled.

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How to use this Journal:

There are many study methods out there! I encourage you to search through them and find what motivates and encourages you the most. I like to use the S.O.A.P Method.

Scripture

Write out a verse or passage of scripture.

Observation

What stood out to you about this verse or scriptures?

Where there any commands or instructions?

Application

How can you apply this today to your life today?

How can you live in light of this truth?

Prayer

Write out a prayer. Ask the Lord to show you how to meditate and apply this truth to your life.

Other areas to consider:

- * Author
- * Audience
- * Major Concept
- * Theme
- * Event
- * Keywords and Definitions
- * People
- * Places
- * When
- * Where
- * Who am I in this Verse?
- * Where is God?
- * What Is God Speaking?

Give yourself room to ponder and pray. Allow yourself time to listen for God to speak to you. Get creative! Draw, paint, make diagrams, whatever ignites your awe and wonder to studying God's Word!

Visit It Starts Small for more examples and in-depth study guide ideas!

www.itstartssmall.com

Song of Solomon

A LOVE LIKE NO OTHER

Notes:

3 *In my bed at night
I sought the one I love;
I sought him, but did not find
him.*

*2 I will arise now and go about the city,
through the streets and the plazas.*

I will seek the one I love.

I sought him, but did not find him.

*3 The guards who go about the city found
me. I asked them, "Have you seen the one
I love?"*

*4 I had just passed them
when I found the one I love.*

*I held on to him and would not let him go
until I brought him to my mother's
house—to the chamber of the one who
conceived me.*

*5 Young women of Jerusalem, I charge
you by the gazelles and the wild does of
the field, do not stir up or awaken love
until the appropriate time.*

Songs 3:1-5

The Pain of Absence

Song of Solomon 3:1

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The Pain of Absence

*3 In my bed at night
I sought the one I love;
I sought him, but did not find him.
Songs 3:1*

The night season of the soul erupts with a fervent ache. The bride lies on her bed—longing, reaching, searching with an intensity that consumes her. The one she adores remains absent, amplifying her desire. The bed in this passage transcends mere rest; it embodies vulnerability and the rawness of her heart. It is the sanctuary of dreams, where emotions dance in the stillness. Here, in her profound solitude, the bride's insatiable hunger roars to life. From this ache, her relentless pursuit ignites. She seeks, yet He eludes her grasp. This moment unveils one of the most profound spiritual experiences: the divine silence. Spiritual dryness, often described as the dark night of the soul, is not a sign of divine rejection; rather, it is a sacred invitation to embark on a journey towards deeper intimacy. God's silence is not absence—it's an alluring mystery. It is the sacred space that resides between desire and discovery. In this space, the bride steps forward, fueled by an insatiable longing.

*¹ Lord, why do you stand so far away?
Why do you hide in times of trouble?
Psalms 10:1*

The Psalmist passionately voices the bride's anguished plea - why must God feel so excruciatingly distant in our moments of dire need? This eternal question resonates through the ages, as old as faith itself. The Psalmist grapples with the heart-wrenching tension between God's divine promises and His seemingly far-off presence. Theologically, this night season plunges us into the depths of longing. True love shines brightest not just in the warmth of closeness, but in the poignant ache of absence. When we perceive God's silence, our faith is stretched and tested — not as a punitive measure, but as a means to cultivate our growth. Love flourishes and deepens precisely when it withstands the trials of distance.

Psychologically, distance ignites an intense yearning within us. Absence awakens a profound desire that can make our hearts ache. Relationships often strengthen through the fiery trials of separation. Attachment theory reveals that longing, when paired with deep emotional connection, serves to solidify the bonds we share. The bride's pursuit of the

Groom is not born of desperation; it's a fervent yearning from a heart that has tasted the sweetness of intimacy. Neuroscience echoes this sentiment, showing that during moments of longing, the brain's reward system pulsates with heightened activity. The pursuit of connection—whether spiritually or relationally—magnifies our awareness, sharpens our focus, and amplifies our emotional sensitivity. Thus, our longing for God is not in vain; it prepares us to recognize Him with a depth we never thought possible.

You may find yourself in the midst of a long, dark night. Your prayers may seem to go unheard, and your worship might feel devoid of life. It may seem like God is distant, but take heart—He is ever-present! He is igniting a fire within your soul, beckoning you to pursue Him, not for the gifts He graciously extends, but for the magnificent essence of who He truly is.

Journal Prompt:

- Have you experienced a season where God felt distant?
- What did it stir in your heart?

Practical Steps and Application:

1. Write honestly to God about where He feels distant in your life.
2. Meditate on Psalm 10:1 and invite God into your questions.
3. Choose stillness today to simply wait on Him.

Deeper Introspection:

*¹ Lord, why do you stand so far away?
Why do you hide in times of trouble?*

Psalms 10:1

Psalm 10:1 presents a raw and honest question that many believers face during times of suffering: "Why, O Lord, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?". This lament psalm gives voice to the feelings of confusion and despair that arise when it seems God is silent or absent amid injustice. The journaling prompts below are designed to help you process these difficult questions with biblical grounding.

Honest questions and heartfelt prayer

- **Acknowledge your feelings.** The psalmist is not afraid to express his frustration to God. In your journal, write out exactly how you feel about your situation and God's perceived distance. Use the psalmist's own words from Psalm 10:1 as a starting point.
- **Consider God's faithfulness.** The psalmist moves from lament to confidence, remembering God's kingship and justice later in the chapter (Psalm 10:16-18). Journal about what you know to be true about God, even when your feelings tell you otherwise.

Scripture references:

- **Psalm 34:19:** "The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all."
- **Psalm 33:20-22:** "We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield... Let your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you."

Trusting God's timing and justice

- **Reflect on God's perspective.** The wicked in Psalm 10 assume God has "forgotten" and will "never notice" their actions (Psalm 10:11). But the psalmist later affirms, "But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand" (Psalm 10:14).. Write about how this contrast challenges your own perspective on your troubles.
- **Practice patience.** The psalm models waiting patiently for the Lord to act. Consider a situation where you feel the wicked are prospering while the righteous suffer. Write down why it is hard for you to wait and what it would look like to trust God's timing.

Scripture reference:

- **Psalm 37:7:** "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes."

Seeking God's presence in the waiting

- **Define "hiding."** The psalmist asks, "Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?" (Psalm 10:1). Reflect on what "hiding" means to you right now. How

are you experiencing God's presence, even if it doesn't feel like a dramatic intervention?

- **Look for small mercies.** In your journal, list the small ways you have seen God show up for you or others in the midst of a difficult season. This practice of gratitude helps retrain your mind to see God's "very present help".

Scripture references:

- **Psalm 46:1:** "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."
- **Isaiah 41:10:** "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Moving toward assurance

- **Pray for a change in perspective.** The psalmist begins with a question but ends with confident praise, trusting that God hears the cries of the afflicted and will establish justice (Psalm 10:17-18). Write a prayer asking God to shift your perspective from anxious questioning to hopeful waiting, believing that his sovereign rule will ultimately prevail.
- **Embrace the process.** The Psalms are a collection of honest emotions poured out to God, not just a list of perfectly polished prayers. Remember that it's okay to feel your emotions and bring them to God honestly. This vulnerability is the first step toward finding peace and assurance in him.

Awakening from Restlessness

Song of Solomon 3:2

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Awakening from Restlessness

*² I will arise now and go about the city,
through the streets and the plazas.
I will seek the one I love.
I sought him, but did not find him.
Songs 3:2*

The moment of longing becomes unbearable for the bride; she cannot anchor herself in the confines of her bed any longer. Desire ignites a fire within her, compelling her to rise. Though the night wraps around her like a shroud and answers dance just out of reach, she is driven to embark on her quest. Love, in its purest form, refuses to accept distance; it relentlessly seeks connection. "I will rise now" — these words signal a powerful transformation from passive ache to fervent pursuit. This kind of spiritual journey often emerges from barren seasons, where we may not feel God's presence, yet a longing deeper than emotion ignites a relentless drive to seek Him still. This is the essence of profound faith: choosing to pursue God not merely in moments of joy but fiercely even amidst the drought.

*⁹ I long for you in the night;
yes, my spirit within me diligently seeks you,
for when your judgments are in the land,
the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.
Isaiah 26:9*

Isaiah passionately echoes this profound theme. Our souls fervently seek Him in the stillness of the night. This intense longing is not fueled by fear or guilt, but by an insatiable spiritual hunger. Even when God feels silent, the spirit within us roars with determination, refusing to cease its quest. Theologically, this moment speaks powerfully to the essence of worship. The very act of rising to search—despite the absence of a guaranteed outcome—is a sacred and beautiful endeavor. It is undeniable that love pulses with life, even when the fervor of feelings has dimmed.

Psychologically, the pursuit is a profound act of healing. In the journey of trauma recovery, the sheer act of agency—deciding to move, to seek, or to voice one's truth—rekindles the flicker of hope. The bride's courageous choice to rise, even as the streets remain shrouded in darkness and the outcome lingers in uncertainty, rejuvenates her spirit with

a renewed sense of purpose and connection. Neuroscience affirms that even the slightest action taken during emotionally desolate periods ignites the motivation circuits in our brains. The very act of seeking—rising up, delving into God’s Word, praying through the stillness—transforms despair into a radiant hope.

Yet, even in her courageous quest, she does not find Him. While this may seem disheartening, it is the truth we face. There are moments when we pour our hearts into prayer, fasting, reading, and worship, yet God still feels elusive. Why does this happen? Not out of cruelty, but rather as a divine act of love, as He seeks to cultivate within us a love that transcends mere emotions. This is the profound mystery of love in silence: God sometimes conceals the awareness of His presence to strengthen our reliance on the enduring truth of His presence.

If you have risen in the depths of your soul's night and still feel an emptiness, do not give up! Your every step holds significance. Your quest is far from futile. You are not walking those streets alone. Love Himself witnesses your ascent and reveres your relentless search for meaning.

Journal Prompt:

- What does it mean to seek God even when you do not feel Him?
- How has your pursuit changed your faith?

Practical Steps and Application:

1. Write "I will rise now and seek You" on a card or note and place it where you will see it.
2. Take a walk or spend time in prayerful pursuit.
3. Read Isaiah 26:9 before you go to bed and when you rise.

Deeper Introspection:

Read Isaiah 26.

Isaiah 26:9, a verse embedded within a song of praise, expresses a deep yearning for God, particularly during a time of affliction, and connects that yearning to a broader purpose.

*⁹ I long for you in the night;
yes, my spirit within me diligently seeks you,
for when your judgments are in the land,
the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.
Isaiah 26:9*

Journaling prompts on seeking God in the darkness

- **The urgency of seeking.** The verse mentions both "the night" and "the morning" as times when the speaker seeks the Lord. What does it look like for you to seek God continuously, in both your darkest moments (the "night") and at the start of each new day (the "morning")?
 - **Related scripture:** Psalm 63:1, where David thirsts for God in a "dry and weary land".
- **The motivation behind the yearning.** The psalmist is not just waiting for the judgments to end but is longing for God himself. Reflect on your own prayers. Are you seeking God for what he can do for you, or are you seeking to know and draw closer to him?
 - **Related scripture:** Psalm 27:4, where the psalmist desires to "gaze on the beauty of the Lord".
- **The path of God's judgments.** The verse says the faithful wait for God "in the path of [his] judgments" (v. 8, NASB). Consider a time of suffering or difficulty you have recently experienced. How did this "path of judgment" lead you to seek God more earnestly than you did during times of ease?
 - **Related scripture:** Lamentations 3:25, which states that "The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him".

Journaling prompts on learning righteousness through judgment

- **Understanding God's righteousness.** The judgment referred to in this verse is not merely punitive but serves a redemptive and educational purpose: to teach righteousness. How have you seen God use difficult situations—in your own life or in the world—to correct people and lead them to a better understanding of what is right?
- **Related scripture:** Hebrews 12:10–11, which says that God disciplines us for our good, so that we may "share his holiness".

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- **The incorrigible heart.** The very next verse (Isaiah 26:10) contrasts the faithful with the wicked, who do not learn righteousness even when shown grace. How does this distinction challenge you to examine your own heart? In what areas are you stubbornly resisting God's correction?
 - **Related scripture:** Romans 2:4, which warns against a "hard and impenitent heart".
 - **Seeking justice and righteousness.** The prophecy points to a future when all will learn righteousness, culminating in God's kingdom. Consider the injustices you see in the world today. How can you pray and act in a way that reflects your own longing for the day when God's justice and righteousness will prevail on earth?
 - **Related scripture:** Matthew 6:33, which instructs us to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness".

Journaling prompts on hope and assurance

- **A contrast of times.** The "night" symbolizes a time of affliction, but the yearning for God extends to the "morning," symbolizing hope and a new day. Write about a challenging period in your life. How did your persistent seeking of God during that time lead to the "morning" of hope and renewal?
 - **Related scripture:** Lamentations 3:22–23, which speaks of God's mercies being "new every morning".
- **Finding security in God.** In the larger context of Isaiah 26, the song expresses confidence that the faithful are secure in God's city (v. 1) even as judgment unfolds. What promises from God give you a sense of peace and security during difficult times?
 - **Related scripture:** Isaiah 26:3, which promises "perfect peace" to those whose minds are steadfast on the Lord.
- **The ultimate fulfillment.** Isaiah's vision points to a future day of complete justice and righteousness. How does the eventual triumph of God's justice give you hope and confidence, even when you see sin and injustice seemingly prospering in the world today?
 - **Related scripture:** Revelation 11:13 and 15:4, which describe all people giving glory to God at the sight of his righteous judgments.

Roaming in the Dark

Song of Solomon 3:3

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Roaming in the Dark

*³ The guards who go about the city found me.
I asked them, "Have you seen the one I love?"
Songs 3:3*

As the bride strides through the desolate city, she encounters the watchmen—the guardians of the streets. Yet, even they are powerless to provide her with what her heart yearns for. With desperation etched in her voice, she implores them, "Have you seen the one I love?" Their silence is deafening, shrouding her in deeper sorrow. No words of comfort escape their lips. No guidance illuminates her path. Just an echo of emptiness. This moment encapsulates the profound heartache of spiritual disarray. The very souls we rely on for solace—spiritual leaders, cherished friends, beloved family, or wise mentors—often stand mute when we seek answers to our most profound questions. We look to others to help us discover God, yet sometimes, even within the church, with all its resplendent beauty and glaring flaws, we find ourselves wanting.

*¹ How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
Psalms 13:1*

This Psalm resonates with the deep, aching delay: 'How long, Lord?' The Psalmist captures the intense yearning of the bride, who ardently longs for God's presence, grappling with the haunting question of His seeming absence. Theologically, this stage illuminates the profound limitations of human assistance and underscores the urgent necessity of personal pursuit. Others can walk beside us, lift us up in prayer, and offer their guidance, but ultimately, it is our own voice, our fervent longing, and our unwavering persistence that will ignite the divine encounter we seek.

Psychologically, this disappointment can either thrust us into bitterness or ignite a fierce resilience within us. When external support fails to satisfy, we are compelled to delve inward – confronting our deepest longings and choosing hope once more. This is the crucible where spiritual maturity is forged. Neuroscience reveals that emotional pain – particularly when intertwined with unmet expectations – lights up the very same regions of the brain as physical anguish. This is why rejection, delay, and silence can sting so deeply. Yet, when we navigate these tumultuous moments in the embrace of faith, they can catalyze profound transformation and illuminate a path to renewed clarity.

Have you ever felt utterly betrayed by those around you on your spiritual journey? You

are not alone in this painful experience. Yet, let it not be the conclusion of your beautiful story! The bride didn't yield to the silence of the watchmen; she pressed forward with unwavering determination. You, too, have that same power within you! God is not playing hide-and-seek to inflict pain upon you—He is beckoning you into those profound realms where only your soul and His Spirit can intertwine in a sacred dance of connection.

Journal Prompt:

- Have you ever felt let down by people when you were spiritually struggling?
- What did that teach you about God and your own heart?

Practical Steps and Application:

1. Write a letter to God about any disappointment you've felt toward spiritual leaders or silence.
2. Read Psalm 13. Write down questions or thoughts that arise. Prayerfully seek the Lord with them.

Deeper Introspection:

Read Psalm 13.

Psalm 13 provides a powerful framework for navigating seasons of despair, doubt, and spiritual abandonment. The psalmist, David, moves from honest, gut-wrenching questions to a final declaration of trust and praise, modeling a healthy and honest prayer life for believers. These journaling prompts will guide you through this journey.

From complaint to petition (verses 1–4)

- **The feeling of abandonment:** The psalm opens with the repeated question, "How long?" and the painful feeling that God has forgotten him and is hiding his face.
 - *Journaling prompt:* Have you ever felt like God has forgotten you or is hiding from you? Write down what those feelings feel like and the specific circumstances that have caused you to feel that way.
 - *Scripture reference:* In the New Testament, Jesus himself cries out from

the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46), showing that even in ultimate agony, it's not a sin to voice our feelings of abandonment to God.

- **Wrestling with internal turmoil:** David admits to having sorrow in his heart "all the day" and wrestling with his thoughts.
 - *Journaling prompt:* What anxieties, worries, or sad thoughts are you wrestling with daily? Give yourself permission to be honest about these internal struggles, just as David was.
 - *Scripture reference:* Proverbs 12:25 reminds us, "Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad." Acknowledge your burdens and then bring them to God.
- **The plea for intervention:** The psalmist asks for God's action, using vivid requests: "Look on me and answer," "lighten my eyes," and protect him from his enemy's triumph.
 - *Journaling prompt:* What specific actions are you asking God to take in your situation? Ask him to "enlighten your eyes" so you can see your circumstances from his perspective.
 - *Scripture reference:* The apostle Paul prays for the Ephesians to have "the eyes of your hearts enlightened" (Ephesians 1:18). Pray for that same kind of spiritual insight.

From trust to praise (verses 5–6)

- **Choosing to trust:** The psalm takes a sharp turn from despair to a deliberate act of trust in God's "steadfast love" or *hesed*. This is a move from relying on feelings to standing on the truth of God's character.
 - *Journaling prompt:* Despite your current feelings, what do you know to be true about God? Write down past experiences and biblical promises that remind you of God's faithful, covenant love for you.
 - *Scripture reference:* Romans 8:38–39 declares that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, reinforcing this powerful promise of steadfast love.

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- **Anticipating salvation:** David's heart can rejoice in God's salvation even before it has occurred.
 - *Journaling prompt:* Reflect on a past time when God brought you through a difficult season. How does remembering that previous "salvation" help you believe he will do it again?
 - *Scripture reference:* The ultimate act of salvation is found in Christ. John Bunyan famously wrote that were it lawful, he could pray for greater trouble for "the greater comfort's sake" that follows.
 - **Committing to worship:** The psalm concludes with a vow to "sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me".
 - *Journaling prompt:* What blessings can you find, even in your current difficult season? Take some time to write a list of thanksgivings, focusing on the ways God has been good to you, both past and present.
 - *Scripture reference:* Even in the midst of trials, believers are commanded to have a posture of gratitude. Philippians 4:6 reminds us to "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

When God Encounters You

Song of Solomon 3:4

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When God Encounters You

*⁴ I had just passed them
when I found the one I love.
I held on to him and would not let him go
until I brought him to my mother's house—
to the chamber of the one who conceived me.
Songs 3:4*

After countless nights of relentless searching, the breakthrough ignites in an exhilarating instant - "I had just passed them when I discovered the one my heart adores." That divine moment of connection can strike unexpectedly, shattering an seemingly endless wait. This profound truth inspires us to hold on steadfastly—our pursuit is not in vain. The bride's heart, once burdened with yearning, now blazes with ecstasy. She clings fiercely to Him. The journey has borne fruit. Her unwavering perseverance culminated in this magnificent encounter. Her longing was sacred. And now, her hands seize what her soul fervently desired.

*¹³ You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all
your heart.
Jeremiah 29:13*

Theologically, this encounter illuminates the unwavering faithfulness of God. He is not distant or indifferent; rather, He draws close to those who earnestly call upon Him. The waiting is not a form of punishment—it is divine preparation. The "scarcely" often emerges after a long season where we feel as though nothing is unfolding.

Psychologically, hope ignites fervently through the fulfillment of our deepest longings. When our efforts culminate in profound connection, it strengthens our emotional ties in ways that resonate deeply. The bride's encounter is not merely a sigh of relief; it's a vibrant renewal of spirit. She now understands in her very core that the pursuit of God holds immense significance. Neuroscience echoes this truth. The brain's reward center releases a surge of dopamine during those ecstatic moments of joy that follow a steadfast journey. This potent interplay fortifies the neural pathways of trust and attachment, transforming the encounter into both a cherished memory and a steadfast anchor.

When you discover Him - hold on fiercely to Him, for in that moment, you uncover a treasure that surpasses all worldly possessions. Let the fiery memory of this divine en-

counter fuel your spirit in the seasons to come, igniting passion within you that will light the way even in your darkest hours. Embrace the strength and love that He offers, allowing it to weave itself into the very fabric of your being. For what once felt lost has transformed into something far more invaluable, something you cannot let go of, something that reminds you of the depth of your faith and the power of connection that transcends time and space cherishing every heartbeat that reverberates with the promise of hope and renewal.

Journal Prompt:

- When has God surprised you with His nearness after a dry season?
- How did it change you?

Practical Steps and Application:

1. Write a personal psalm of gratitude for a time God met you unexpectedly.
2. Take a walk or sit quietly and reflection the reality of His nearness to you now.
3. Share your encounter with someone who may need encouragement.

Deeper Introspection:

*¹³ You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all
your heart.*
Jeremiah 29:13

Jeremiah 29:13 is a powerful promise from God to his exiled people: "You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart". This promise of return and restoration was first given to the Israelites in Babylon, but its universal principle applies to believers today. The following journaling prompts will help you reflect on what it means to seek God wholeheartedly.

Prompts for self-examination

- **Honest self-assessment:** Jeremiah 29:13 is a verse of accountability. Are you seeking God with *all* your heart, or is your heart divided? What are the other things—whether relationships, a job, money, or achievements—that compete

for your devotion? Write them down honestly.

- **A contrast of times:** The promise in Jeremiah 29:13 came during a time of immense trouble for the Israelites. Reflect on a season of hardship in your own life. How did your seeking of God change during that time? Did you seek him more earnestly, or did you pull away?
- **Defining "all your heart":** What does it mean for you to seek God with all your heart in your current situation? Is it more prayer, more time in the Bible, or a greater willingness to obey? Write down specific, practical ways you can demonstrate a wholehearted commitment.

Prompts for active seeking and discovery

- **Seeking and finding:** The promise is that when you seek him wholeheartedly, you *will* find him. In your journal, write a prayer inviting God to search your heart and remove anything that is hindering you from finding him.
- **The pursuit of God:** Deuteronomy 4:29 is another verse that pairs wholehearted seeking with finding God. Journal about this idea of pursuit: What does it feel like to chase after God, and what has your experience been in finding him?
- **The path to righteousness:** The surrounding chapter of Jeremiah talks about God's judgments teaching the world righteousness (Jeremiah 26:9). What is one difficult situation you are currently facing, and what is a lesson in righteousness that God may be trying to teach you through it?

Prompts for hope and assurance

- **Reflecting on answered prayers:** Matthew 7:7-8 echoes the theme of seeking and receiving. Jesus says, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you". Look back at your past journaling entries. What were you seeking a year ago, and how has God answered that prayer?
- **Trusting the process:** The Israelites in exile had to live with the tension of being in a foreign land while holding on to God's promise of restoration. What tension are you holding right now? Journal about how you can lean into God's hope and peace while you are still in a difficult season.
- **God's pursuit of you:** Remember that God is not just waiting for you to find

him; he is also actively pursuing you. Write a reflection or a prayer based on Luke 15, the story of the prodigal son, and God's compassionate heart.

Grasping through Mystery

Song of Solomon 3:4

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Grasping through Mystery

*⁴ I had just passed them
when I found the one I love.
I held on to him and would not let him go
until I brought him to my mother's house—
to the chamber of the one who conceived me.*

Songs 3:4

The bride's pursuit has ignited into protection. She resolutely clings to the One she loves, fiercely determined to embrace Him in the depths of her origin—the most sacred sanctum of her life, represented by the chamber of her conception. This hallowed space pulses with intimacy and reverence. Each line of this verse brims with profound symbolism. To welcome the Beloved into the heart of her mother's home is to weave divine love into the very fabric of her history, her foundation, her very identity. No longer does she conceal fragments of herself; the pursuit has blossomed into a glorious wholeness.

*⁸ I follow close to you;
your right hand holds on to me.*

Psalms 63:8

Theologically, this is a profound act of surrender. She isn't merely welcoming Christ into her circumstances—she is inviting Him into the very core of her being. She opens the door to her past, embraces her roots, and lays bare her beginnings. This is the essence of true intimacy: a complete unreserved offering, with nothing held back.

Psychologically, healing ignites when we cease to compartmentalize our spiritual and emotional lives. When we invite God into the "mother's house"—those deep, subconscious spaces where we were molded—we open the door for Him to redeem not only our present but also our entire narrative. Neuroscience confirms this profound truth. When our past traumas or shame encounter the transformative power of love and safety, our brains begin a miraculous rewiring. Neural pathways once shackled to fear and pain are replaced with vibrant connections to peace and safety. God's love, in its boundless compassion, changes us from the inside out, illuminating our souls with hope and renewal.

If you've invited Jesus into your present, that's truly beautiful! But today, I urge you to go

deeper! Invite Him into your very origins, into the profound places of identity, memory, and formative experiences. Hold Him close, and allow Him to embrace you there with all His love and presence.

Journal Prompt:

- What memories or parts of your story do you need to invite God into?

Practical Steps and Application:

1. Pray over those early memories, asking Jesus to meet you in that moment.
2. Draw or map your spiritual journey - where did God show up? Where had you wish He had?

Deeper Introspection:

Read Psalm 63.

Psalm 63, a psalm written by David while he was in the wilderness of Judah, is a powerful reflection on seeking, finding, and rejoicing in God even during the driest seasons of life. His expressions of longing and hope provide a framework for our own journaling.

Part 1: Yearning for God in the wilderness (verses 1-2)

- **Identify your "wilderness."** David compares his desperate thirst for God to physical dehydration "in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Psalm 63:1). Reflect on and describe the "wilderness" you are in—whether it is a time of spiritual dryness, emotional hardship, or a season of loss.
- **Examine your deepest longing.** When all other comforts are stripped away, what do you yearn for most? Is it God himself, or is it relief from your circumstances? Journal about the difference between seeking God and seeking only his blessings.
- **Recall past encounters.** David intentionally remembers seeing God's "power and glory" in the sanctuary (Psalm 63:2). Take time to reflect on a past time when you vividly experienced God's presence or saw his mighty hand at work. Describe that memory and how it impacts you now.

Part 2: Praising God from the soul (verses 3–8)

- **Embrace God's love.** David declares that God's "steadfast love is better than life" (Psalm 63:3). Honestly consider if you believe this truth. What would it look like for you to live as if God's love is your most precious possession?
 - *Related scripture:* 1 John 4:16, "So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."
- **Turn your thoughts to praise.** Even in the desert, David is filled with praise and sings songs of joy because God is his "help" (Psalm 63:7). Meditate on God's character and past faithfulness. What can you praise God for right now, even in the midst of your trial?
 - *Related scripture:* Philippians 4:6–7, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
- **Cling to God.** David says, "My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me" (Psalm 63:8). The imagery of clinging and being upheld describes a dependent relationship. In what ways do you try to hold on to your own strength? Write a prayer surrendering that control and asking God to be your sole support.

Part 3: Trusting God's ultimate victory (verses 9–11)

- **Look to God's justice.** David expresses confidence that his enemies will ultimately face defeat, while "the king shall rejoice in God" (Psalm 63:11). While you may not have enemies in the same sense, what or who is opposing you today? How does the promise of God's final justice and victory give you hope?
- **Find joy beyond circumstance.** Despite his circumstances, David rejoices in God, knowing his loyalty to the Lord will be rewarded. Reflect on the difference between happiness (based on circumstances) and joy (based on God's character). How can you cultivate a heart of joy even when your situation doesn't feel joyful?
 - *Related scripture:* Psalm 16:11, "You make known to me the path of life;

in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

- **Proclaim God's truth.** David contrasts the "liars" who will be silenced with those who "glory" in God (Psalm 63:11). Consider where you have believed lies about your circumstances, your worth, or God's faithfulness. Write a personal declaration of God's truth, affirming what you know to be true about him and his promises.

The Power of Sacred Rest

Song of Solomon 3:5

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The Power of Sacred Rest

*⁵ Young women of Jerusalem, I charge you
by the gazelles and the wild does of the field,
do not stir up or awaken love
until the appropriate time.
Songs 3:5*

The scene unfolds slowly, enveloped in a velvet embrace. The bride, having traversed the depths of her heart, has finally discovered her sanctuary. With a fierce intensity, she turns to her companions, delivering a solemn plea - do not stir love before its moment arrives. This moment is electric, reverberating with significance. Love moves with a rhythm all its own, and there is no urgency to push ahead. This is a time of sacred reprieve, where the chase has gracefully subsided, not due to waning desire, but because a profound connection has been forged. She is fulfilled, reveling in this exquisite stillness. This rest is not indifference; it is the essence of deep-seated confidence and knowing.

*¹⁵ For the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, has said:
"You will be delivered by returning and resting;
your strength will lie in quiet confidence.
But you are not willing."
Isaiah 30:15*

Theologically, we are passionately reminded that God's timing is nothing short of perfect. We often find ourselves yearning to feel more, to experience more, and to rush ahead—but the Spirit tenderly whispers, "not yet." In this waiting, there is an incredible strength; in stillness, profound wisdom awaits us.

Psychologically, rest is not just important; it is vital for our renewal. After enduring prolonged spiritual intensity, the soul craves tranquility. Our nervous system longs to recalibrate, to regain balance. The bride's call resonates deeply, echoing both spiritual and psychological truths: rest, wait, trust. Neuroscience reveals the profound wisdom that stillness can rejuvenate our capacity to manage stress. In the embrace of quietude, our brain flourishes, unlocking creativity and clarity. When we finally cease our relentless striving, healing not only begins; it accelerates, transforming our very being.

If you find yourself in a season where there seems to be nothing left to "do" - banish any

feelings of guilt! The Spirit could very well be beckoning you into a sacred stillness. Perhaps it's time to cease stirring what God is allowing to settle. Embrace the beauty of letting love rest until the moment is ripe for action!

Journal Prompt:

- What part of your life do you feel pressure to stir up or fix?
- What would it look like to trust God's pace there?

Practical Steps and Application:

1. Create a "sabbath moment" today - 15-30 minutes of no performance or productivity.
2. Take a short nap or nature walk as an act of spiritual rest.

Deeper Introspection:

¹⁵ *For the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, has said:
"You will be delivered by returning and resting;
your strength will lie in quiet confidence.
But you are not willing."
Isaiah 30:15*

Isaiah 30:15 offers a powerful and counter-intuitive message about finding strength through quietness and trust, rather than through frantic effort and self-reliance. The prophet Jeremiah delivered this message to a nation that was relying on its own plans for deliverance rather than resting in God's promises. The following prompts use the verse as a guide to reflect on your own spiritual practices and reliance on God.

On repentance and returning to God

- **The path of "returning":** The phrase "in returning and rest you shall be saved" speaks of repentance—turning away from self-reliant striving and turning back to God.
 - *Journaling prompt:* What is a specific situation in your life right now where you are trying to take control or solve a problem in your own strength? What would "returning" to God in this situation look like?

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- *Scripture reference:* Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."
 - **The invitation to rest:** The world often praises busyness and hard work, but Isaiah calls us to find rest as a path to salvation and strength.
 - *Journaling prompt:* In what areas are you pushing your emotional, physical, or spiritual limits? What fears are you holding that make it hard for you to stop and rest?
 - *Scripture reference:* Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

On quietness and trust as strength

- **Embracing quietness:** Isaiah contrasts God's call to quietness with the people's desire to "flee on horses". True spiritual strength comes not from a flurry of activity but from a settled confidence in God.
 - *Journaling prompt:* In what areas of your life do you need to stop talking and start listening? Write a prayer asking God to quiet your anxious thoughts so you can hear his voice more clearly.
 - *Scripture reference:* Psalm 46:10, "Be still, and know that I am God."
- **Growing in trust:** Trusting God is not a passive activity but a deliberate decision to rely on his character and promises, even when circumstances are uncertain.
 - *Journaling prompt:* When you look at the situations causing you stress, what "heart idols" are being exposed? Is it the need for a specific outcome, the approval of others, or fear of losing something? Confess these to God and write a declaration of trust in his ultimate control.
 - *Scripture reference:* Psalm 62:5-6, "For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken."

On willingness and obedience

- **The unwillingness to trust:** Isaiah concludes this verse with a stark warning: "But you would have none of it." The people rejected God's offer of true salvation and strength, choosing instead to follow their own wisdom.
 - *Journaling prompt:* Reflect on past decisions where you ignored God's gentle invitation to "return and rest." What were the consequences of your self-reliance?
 - *Scripture reference:* James 4:6, "But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'"
- **Choosing God's way:** Though the Israelites initially refused, the invitation remains open to us today.
 - *Journaling prompt:* Write a prayer of surrender, asking God for the humility and willingness to follow his way, even when it feels counterintuitive. What is one small step you can take today to move from striving to resting in his plan?
 - *Scripture reference:* Hebrews 4:9-11, which talks about entering God's rest through faith and obedience.

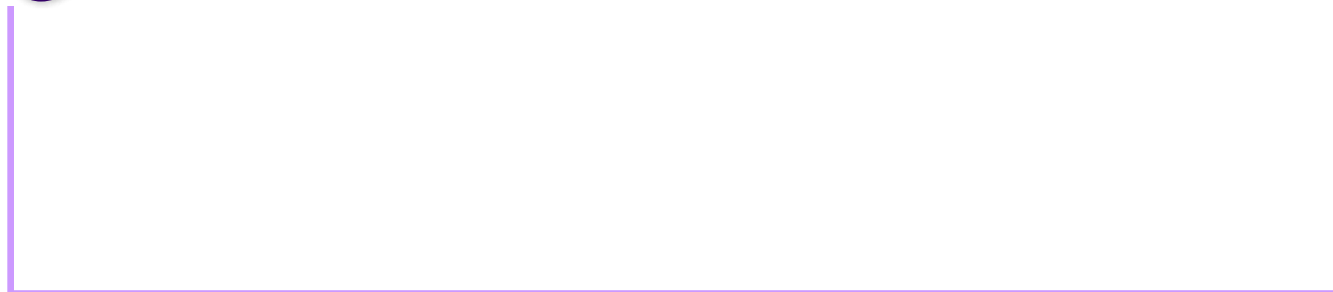
The Mystery of His Movements

Song of Solomon 3:5

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The Mystery of His Movements

*⁵ Young women of Jerusalem, I charge you
by the gazelles and the wild does of the field,
do not stir up or awaken love
until the appropriate time.
Songs 3:5*

This study concludes in the depths of mystery, echoing the timeless refrain: do not stir up or awaken love until the appropriate time. God holds back certain explanations, withholding a definitive formula; instead, He invites us to rest, to honor, and to trust. Love, much like God, dances to its own rhythm. There are vibrant seasons of passionate pursuit and tranquil seasons of peaceful reflection. We experience nights steeped in silence followed by mornings bursting with encounters. Yet, every moment is intricately woven into His design. As we deepen in our understanding of love, we unveil the beauty of this profound mystery.

*It is the glory of God to conceal a matter
and the glory of kings to investigate a matter.
Proverbs 25:2*

This proverb illuminates a profound truth: not all hiddenness signifies loss. There are moments when God veils Himself, igniting a deep hunger within us that craves His presence. And then, in striking contrast, there are times when He unveils Himself, pouring out peace into our restless hearts. Our calling is not to dictate the timing of these divine encounters, but to wholeheartedly trust in the beautiful process. Theologically, this moment serves as a poignant reminder that faith transcends mere certainty—it's all about fostering an intimate relationship with the Divine. We don't pursue God merely for answers; we chase after Him, longing for the richness of His very being.

Psychologically, embracing the mystery of life ignites our resilience! When we choose not to seek constant explanations but instead dwell in awe, we experience profound spiritual and emotional growth. Trust emerges as our steadfast anchor. Neuroscience reveals that wonder not only enriches our lives but also elevates our well-being. Our brains flourish in the embrace of beauty and curiosity! Living with reverent expectation nourishes our souls far more than existing in a state of relentless urgency. So, let love envelop you. Allow your spirit to exhale joyfully in the presence of the Divine, who may evade our maps but consistently moves among us in love.

Journal Prompt:

- What mystery in your life are you learning to trust rather than solve? How can you honor God in that space?

Practical Steps and Application:

1. Read Proverbs 25:2 and write down one hidden area where you choose to trust.
2. Practice awe - notice beauty without trying to understand it.

Deeper Introspection:

*It is the glory of God to conceal a matter
and the glory of kings to investigate a matter.*
Proverbs 25:2

Proverbs 25:2 is a profound verse that establishes a beautiful parallel between divine and human activity: "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter." The verse suggests that God's majesty is revealed in his wisdom, which is so vast that he can hold secrets, while human glory is achieved through the diligent pursuit of knowledge and truth.

This verse offers rich insights for journaling.

On God's glorious mystery

God's act of concealing matters serves to humble us and reminds us of our limited understanding. This concealment is for his purposes and can protect us from truths we are not ready to handle. Seeking God and his truth brings a joy that is more valuable than simply receiving immediate answers.

- *Journaling prompt:* Reflect on the mysteries of God you face and how surrendering your need for complete understanding can deepen your relationship with Him. Consider a time when God's timing in revealing something proved perfect, teaching you to trust His wisdom.
- *Scripture references:* Romans 11:33 and Deuteronomy 29:29 offer perspectives on God's unsearchable ways and hidden things.

On the king's glorious search

The "glory of kings" in searching out matters applies to all who are called to lead with wisdom. This search for truth is not just for personal benefit but should also serve the community. As believers, we are called to be "kings and priests" under Jesus Christ, the ultimate truth we seek.

- *Journaling prompt:* Identify areas in your life where you are called to seek wisdom, considering how your search can benefit those around you. Reflect on how knowing Christ, the embodiment of wisdom, motivates your daily pursuit of understanding.
- *Scripture references:* 1 Kings 3:9 and James 1:5 highlight the importance of asking for wisdom, and Colossians 2:3 points to the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ.



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