



## SOUL CARE: PART 3: THIRSTING FOR GOD

January 19, 2020  
Pastor Alex Lessler

### BIBLICAL TEXT(S)

#### **MAIN TEXT(S):**

*Psalm 42 + 43*

### SUMMARY

Our culture is obsessed with wellness. Despite that, we seem to be less happy than ever before. While wellness is a good thing, what we are really missing is wholeness. Wholeness is something that only God can provide. Psalm 42 and 43 remind us of these hard truths. Sometimes even those who are pursuing God can feel a lack of wholeness caused by a distance from God.

While we can create distance between ourselves and God through sin or busyness—and sometimes Satan chooses to block us from God’s presence—other times God himself seems to withhold his presence from us. This isn’t done because of any fault in us. Instead, it is something that God does to help us to grow in our relationship with him. If we are feeling distant from God, we also have hope that God can use this experience to draw us closer to himself. Our God is the same faithful God whether we feel close to him or not. That’s something that should give us hope, no matter our circumstances.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*These questions are designed to help you lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage and the speaker’s message, helping them understand and apply the teaching.*

#### **LEAN IN**

***These are icebreaker/warm up questions, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.***

1. Have you heard the phrase “Dark Night of the Soul” before this sermon?  
What did/do you think this phrase refers to, if you had to guess?
2. What have you done this past week to pursue wellness in some aspect of your life?
3. The last time we met, we talked about [whatever you talked about]. Has anyone had a chance to put that lesson into practice? Has it had an impact on your life in any way?
4. What is one thing that you’re looking forward to this week? What’s one that you are dreading?

#### **LOOK DOWN**

***These are questions on the passage and observations about what’s been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max***

1. Read through Psalm 42-43. What phrase is repeated multiple times in these two psalms? How would you describe the overall tone of these psalms?
2. Do you notice a difference in focus/attitude in the two Psalms?  
What do you think the difference is or is there one?
3. What in what ways does the Psalmist respond to his soul being downcast in Psalm 42 and 43?
4. What phrases in Psalm 42 and 43 express distress or pain? What phrases express hope?
5. What words and phrases does the Psalmist use to describe God in these psalms?

## LOOK OUT

*These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today.*

*Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max*

1. What kinds of things usually separate a person from God? Do any of these things seem to be at play in the Psalms 42 and 43? Why or why not?
2. How do people typically respond if they feel distant to God? How do you think one should respond based on the text of these two Psalms?
3. On Sunday, Pastor Alex talked about the difference between wellness and wholeness. What is the difference between wellness and wholeness? Is it possible to be working towards wellness and not achieve wholeness? Why or why not?
4. Pastor Alex suggested that the Psalmist is experiencing something called "The Dark Night of the Soul", where it seems that God has removed his presence for no obvious reason. Do you know anyone (or know of anyone) who has experienced this? How did they deal with it?
5. How do people experience hope in God today? Have you ever seen God's hope help someone through a difficult season or circumstance?

## LOOK IN

*These are questions that help you consider personal application.*

*Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max*

1. Have you felt distant from God because of something you did (sin, busyness, etc.)? Have you ever felt a distance from God that you couldn't easily explain? How did you come closer to God in either case?
2. How does this passage confirm or challenge your ideas about God's presence (or the feelings of God's presence) in your life?
3. Have you ever experienced a "Dark Night of the Soul"? How did it impact your relationship with God?
4. How have you experienced God's hope in your life?
5. What do you think about the idea that God might remove the feeling of his presence from our lives? Do you find that idea challenging or comforting? Why?

## LIVE IT OUT

*These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life.*

*Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. Are you experiencing a distance from God in your life right now? Perhaps you think you are currently experiencing a "Dark Night of the Soul." How can your group pray for you as you seek to close this gap between yourself and God?
2. Are you currently lacking in hope? How can your group support you this week as you seek to find hope in God?
3. What has God taught you through this Scripture and sermon? How will it impact how you live your life and interact with others this week?



