

When You Feel Overwhelmed



“When I am overwhelmed, you alone know the way I should turn. Wherever I go, my enemies have set traps for me.” Psalm 142:3 NLT

- When have you been unfairly criticized, rejected, mistreated by someone self-centered, jealous, and corrupt?

Psalm 142 is the last of the psalms of David that refers to the time he was running and hiding from King Saul. God had removed the crown from Saul as king of Israel (1 Samuel 13). Saul had repeatedly disobeyed God and was not worthy to be the king of God’s people. God sent Samuel to anoint David as the new king (1 Samuel 16). Saul was jealous of David and tried to repeatedly kill him (1 Samuel 19). David would not harm Saul so he had to avoid him (1 Samuel 24). David, and the men loyal to him, lived in caves and the countryside where Saul could not touch him.

These were difficult times for David. He had always honored Saul and served him faithfully. He wrestled with many different emotions. The psalms that refer to this time of David’s exile are psalms 7, 34, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59.

The central emotion that David seemed to be struggling with at the time of writing psalm 142 was that of **feeling overwhelmed**. All of us can relate to this. We all have had times when we felt overwhelmed by the challenges of life.

From Psalm 142 we learn how to respond when we feel overwhelmed. We should respond spiritually before we take physical or administrative action. Respond with your heart before responding with your hands and feet. Let your heart guide your hands and your feet.

Central Lesson:

When feeling overwhelmed, respond with your heart before responding with your hands and feet.

The Cause of David Feeling Overwhelmed

David described several painful emotions in Psalm 142:

- **DESPERATION** (v.1)

“1 I cry out to the Lord; I plead for the Lord’s mercy.”

Bible scholar, Warren Wiersbe, offers a helpful insight: “David not only cried aloud with his voice, but he cried earnestly from his heart. He was a godly young man who had faithfully served the Lord and his king, and yet there he was in a cave, hiding like a guilty criminal. Later in life, David would understand more fully that during those fugitive years in the wilderness, God was equipping him for the work he would do the rest of his life...” (*The Transformation Study Bible*, 142:1-2)

- **Mistreated** (v.2)

“2 I pour out my complaints before him...”

- **Troubled** (v.2)

“2 ...and tell him all my troubles.”

- **Endangered** (v.3)

“3 When I am overwhelmed, you alone know the way I should turn. Wherever I go, my enemies have set traps for me.”

- **FORGOTTEN** (v.4)

“4 I look for someone to come and help me, but no one gives me a passing thought! No one will help me; no one cares a bit what happens to me.”

The Cure for David Feeling Overwhelmed

What did David do when overwhelmed? What should we do when overwhelmed? David’s first response was spiritual. No doubt, he took physical and administrative actions, but his first response was spiritual.

1. **Look to God for GUIDANCE** (v. 3)

“3 When I am overwhelmed, you alone know the way I should turn....”

2. **Connect with God in PRAYER**—Prayer helps us to connect to God’s wisdom, encouragement, guidance, power, and all the resources He makes available to His people (v. 5).

“5 Then I pray to you, O Lord....”

The *Life Application Study Bible* adds, “Have you ever felt that no one cared what happened to you? David had good reason to feel that way... Through prayer, we can pull out of our tailspin and be reminded that God cares for us deeply.” (142:6)

3. **Lean on God for REFUGE (protection)** (v. 5).

“5 ...I say, “You are my place of refuge. You are all I really want in life.”

4. **Make your relationship with God the ultimate DESIRE and priority in your life** (v. 5)

“5 ...I say...You are all I really want in life.”

5. **Trust God to be actively INVOLVED in the circumstances and problems of your life** (vs.6-7).

“6 Hear my cry, for I am very low. Rescue me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me. 7 Bring me out of prison so I can thank you. The godly will crowd around me, for you are good to me.”

The *Life Application Study Bible* explains David’s reference to being in prison. “The psalm was written when David was hiding from Saul in caves like the ones at Adullam (1 Samuel 22) or En-gedi (1 Samuel 24). These may have seemed like prison to him because of the confinement.” (142:7)

Warren Wiersbe, added, “Eventually, David was delivered, and the nation surrounded him and received him as God’s chosen ruler....” (142:7)

Central Lesson:

When feeling overwhelmed, respond with your heart before responding with your hands and feet.

► Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to next Sunday’s study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.