



## **“God > My Loneliness”**

**Psalm 142**

**Small Group Plan**

*“A prayer of David when he was in a cave”*

— Psalm 142 —

This is the final psalm attributed to David as he tried to escape from Saul (cf. Psalm 7, 34, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59). It is uncertain if his “prison” (v. 7) refers to the cave of Adullam (1 Samuel 22) or a cave in En Gedi (1 Samuel 24), but there is no question that he feels vulnerable, depressed, trapped and afraid. But David follows a holy protocol he has learned through years of spiritual formation. He cries out to the one who has always been gre>ter than any problem he has encountered ... his God.

### **OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...**

- Psychology Today added to a growing group of studies by publishing an article entitled, “*The Loneliness of Social Media*” (7-21-15). Why has the explosion of social media in our time led to more loneliness, not less?
- How has wealth created more loneliness?

### **LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...**

#### **BECAUSE GOD IS GRE>TER**

*... He Hears My Prayers ...*

**Psalm 142:1-2**

<sup>1</sup> *I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy.* <sup>2</sup> *I pour out before him my complaint; before him I tell my trouble.*

- Notice the verbal descriptions in these verses, “aloud” “my voice” “I tell.” Why is it good to get alone (on a walk / in a cave) and talking out loud to God?
- Notice how David’s “complaint” is framed as a request for “mercy.” How does his complaining differ from today’s typical complaint?
- Why does it help to talk to someone (God) who already understands you?

**BECAUSE GOD IS GREATER**  
**... He Knows My Circumstances ...**  
**Psalm 142:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who watch over my way. In the path where I walk people have hidden a snare for me. <sup>4</sup> Look and see, there is no one at my right hand; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life.

- Notice how the pronoun becomes more personal, changing from “him” (v. 2) to “you” (v. 3). Why do David and we need a sense of intimacy with God?
- How can we find this kind of intimacy?
- Offsetting the “you” that David receives from God (v. 3) is the “no one” he is receiving from people – “there is no one” “no one is concerned” “no one cares” (v. 4). How would you describe the feeling of having “no one” in your life?
- When David feels spiritually “faint” (v. 3) and emotionally weak why does he immediately turn to God, and what does God provide for him?
- What do think is worse — to be ignored, i.e. “no one cares” (v. 4) or to be attacked, i.e. “hidden a snare for me” (v. 3)? Explain.

**BECAUSE GOD IS GREATER**  
**... He Is My Protection ...**  
**Psalm 142:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> I cry to you, Lord; I say, “You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.” <sup>6</sup> Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me.

- Why is it wise to admit weakness as David does, “they are too strong for me.”
- Why does David say that God is his “portion”? Compare Num 18:20 & Ps 73:26.

**BECAUSE GOD IS GREATER**  
**... He Is My Liberator ...**  
**Psalm 142:7**

<sup>7</sup> Set me free from my prison that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.

- Since David was free to walk out of his cave anytime he wanted, what was his real “prison”? Who or what was holding him a prisoner?
- David introduces a new word at the end of his psalm – “praise.” How and why does prayer give way to praise?
- What were the steps along the way that brought David from “no one cares” (v. 4) to “the righteous will gather about me” (v. 7)?

## **USE IT / APPLY IT ...**

- What (or where) is your “cave” your place of retreat?
- What is the difference between retreating to heal and withdrawing to disappear?
- Was David’s crisis in any way a blessing? Explain.
- What have you learned about yourself and about God during your low points?
- Close by asking God to break the social barriers that separate us from others.